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# SPEECHES

OF THE RIGHT HON.

THE

# MARQUIS OF SALISBURY



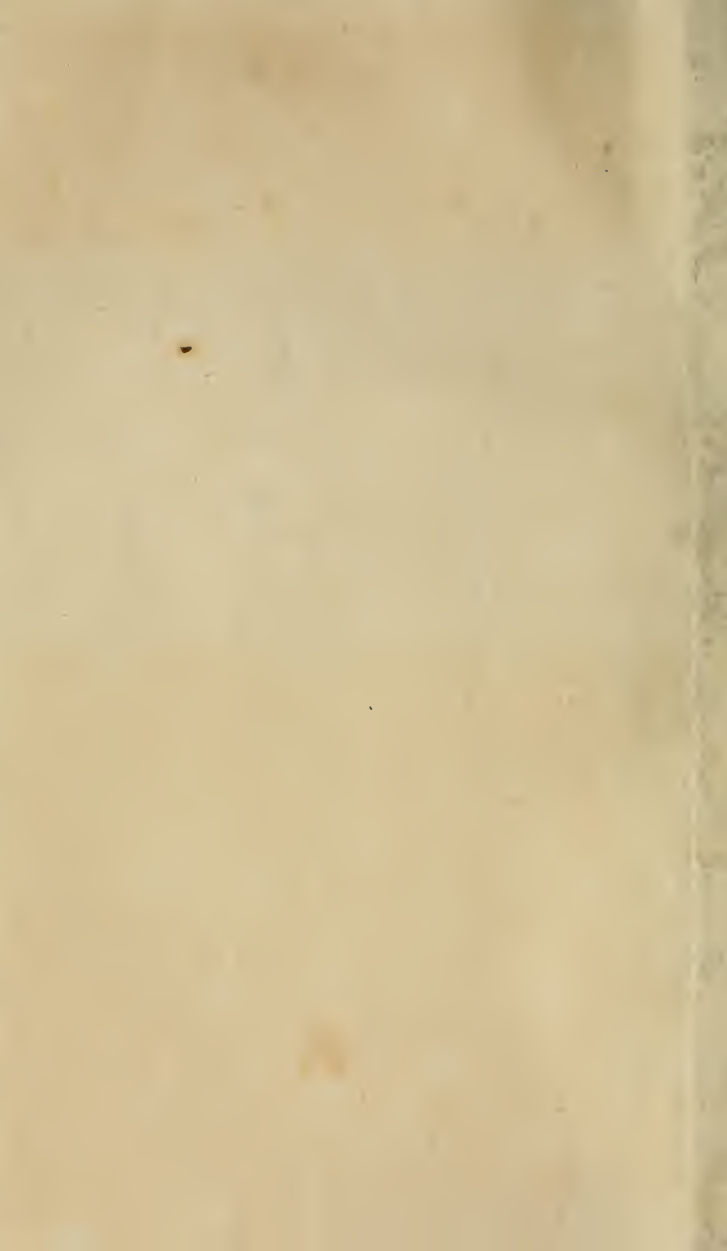
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SPEECHES  
OF THE  
MARQUIS OF SALISBURY

(With a Sketch of his Life)

EDITED BY  
HENRY W. LUCY



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## THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY.

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THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY enjoyed the great advantage, not common to his order, of passing his early manhood without being subjected to the enervating influences that surround an heir-apparent. Born a second son, he had not, up to his thirty-fifth year, looked forward to anything more than being the brother to a great peer, himself holding the courtesy title of Lord Robert Cecil. As such he was known up to the year 1865, when his elder brother, the heir to the marquise, suddenly died, and Lord Robert's prospects in life underwent an extensive change. Lord Robert Cecil sat in the House of Commons as member for Stamford, for which borough he was elected in his twenty-third year, and which he represented till he was removed to the Upper House on the death of his father in April, 1868. With the portion of a younger son he essayed to add to his income by work in the field of journalism. At one time, it is understood, he was pretty regularly engaged as a leader writer on the *Times*. His connection with the *Quarterly*

*Review* is practically avowed, and was not intermitted when he became marquis. He spoke frequently in the House of Commons, and speedily earned a reputation as a dangerous debater. His style is a little mellowed now, but the speeches of Lord Robert Cecil and Lord Cranborne were calculated to make an adversary writhe.

Oddly enough, at this period, Mr. Disraeli was a principal object of the withering sarcasm and thunderous indignation of his future colleague. The venomous assaults which Mr. Disraeli had made upon Sir Robert Peel were sometimes equalled by the fury and scorn poured over his own head by the young member for Stamford. Mr. Disraeli probably remembered this when, towards the close of the session of 1874, he apologised for some strong language used in the other House by Lord Salisbury, and complained of by Sir William Harcourt. "As the House knows," Mr. Disraeli said, with an apologetic shrug of his shoulders, "my noble colleague is a master of the art of jeers and flouts and sneers," and on the whole indicated his opinion that the House might safely disregard the remarks of the noble marquis as those of a gentleman who occasionally permitted himself to be led away by a faculty for saying bitter things for no other reason than that they were smart.

In 1866 Lord Cranborne was appointed Secretary of State for India in Lord Derby's third Administration. He did not



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SPEECHES  
OF THE  
MARQUIS OF SALISBURY



*UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME.*

THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE'S  
SPEECHES.

THE RIGHT HON. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN'S  
SPEECHES.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL'S SPEECHES.

hold the post long. In the following year the ancient adversary and then colleague, Mr. Disraeli, brought in his Reform Bill, and Lord Salisbury resigned in company with General Peel and Lord Carnarvon, with whom in later years he had further experiences of resignation. The Reform Bill of 1867 was very narrow in its scope compared with the Bill passed in 1880, and the fact that Lord Salisbury personally co-operated in the drafting of the latter marks a long stride in compulsory political education.

In 1868, as already noted, Lord Cranborne's father died, and he took his seat in the House of Lords as Marquis of Salisbury, with promise, since abundantly fulfilled, of proving himself the most able and illustrious holder of the title. Lord Salisbury has always shown himself a man of considerable business capacity. He has a natural leaning towards chemistry, and if he had not been a marquis might have become a scientist. At Hatfield he has his laboratory, where he spends some of the happiest hours of a long and busy life. Although by hereditary influences a Conservative, he was one of the first to accept so new a thing as the electric light. Skilfully taking advantage of the river that runs through his park, he constructed a system of works which supply Hatfield House with a cheap and constant supply of illumination.

In 1871 he turned his business talents to an unusual account. In conjunction with the late Earl Cairns he

entered upon a long investigation into the complicated affairs of the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway. In 1874, on Mr. Disraeli being returned to office at the head of a great majority, a complete reconciliation was effected between the old adversaries. The Marquis of Salisbury accepted office at his former post as Secretary of State for India, and there sprung up between him and his chief a close friendship, evidences of which sometimes touched members of either House who remembered what had been. When Mr. Disraeli was first transferred to the House of Lords it was noted that Lord Cranbrook usually sat as a buffer between him and the black-bearded Secretary of State for India. Before Lord Beaconsfield's first session was over Lord Cranbrook had withdrawn, and the two ancient foemen, each worthy of the other's steel, sat side by side in perfect amity.

In 1876 Lord Salisbury proceeded to Constantinople, where he presided at the abortive conference which followed upon the close of the war between Turkey and Servia. In 1878, when Lord Derby resigned his post at the Foreign Office, Lord Salisbury succeeded him, commemorating his accession to office by the issue of a despatch in which, with the trained hand of a gentleman of the press, he clearly and forcibly set forth the policy of the British Government on the Eastern Question. In the same year he proceeded to Berlin in company with Lord Beaconsfield as representative

of Great Britain at the Congress which framed the famous Berlin Treaty. For his services on that occasion Lord Salisbury received the Order of the Garter from the Queen and the Freedom of the City of London from the Lord Mayor and Corporation.

When Lord Beaconsfield died there was some dispute as to who should be his successor. Lord Cairns was mentioned, and the Duke of Richmond actually took up the reins fallen from the hand of the dead leader. But after Lord Beaconsfield was gone there was no place in the Conservative Party for the Marquis of Salisbury save that of leader. Into this he was, in the spring of 1881, formally inducted, and has since, with undisputed sway, led the Conservative Party in the House of Lords.

As a speaker, Lord Salisbury is without an equal in the Upper House. His style has the polish of the literary man but never slips into the style of the essayist. It would be easy to quote scores of happy things uttered by him. They will be worth seeking in the speeches contained in this volume. But I may cite one of an earlier date which is an admirable specimen of his style. Speaking at a Conservative banquet given at Hertford towards the close of Mr. Gladstone's first Administration, and referring to the Ministry as one of heroic measures, he said: "Far be it from me to accuse them of heroism. They keep their heroism

to the Home Office. They don't let it transgress the threshold of the Foreign Office. They offer to us a remarkable instance of Christian meekness and humility; but I am afraid it is that kind of Christian meekness which turns the left cheek to Russia and America, and demands the uttermost farthing of Ashantee."

Born in 1830, Lord Salisbury is still in the prime of life, as statesmen are reckoned, and may be expected long to adorn the Senate and illustrate the highest development of the culture and vigour of the Conservative Party.

HENRY W. LUCY.

*November, 1885.*

# SPEECHES

OF THE

## MARQUIS OF SALISBURY.



---

### *THE GROWTH OF THE RADICAL PARTY.*

(AT EDINBURGH, NOVEMBER 23, 1882.)

I thank you most sincerely for the very kind manner in which my health has been proposed by Lord Dalkeith, and received by you. It is encouraging to all who are engaged in the arduous duties which now fall on those who fight in the Conservative ranks to feel that they are sustained and animated by the support of powerful and influential meetings such as this. It has been thought, perhaps, something of an intrusion that we should come to this metropolis of Liberalism at all. But we have benevolent views with regard to this metropolis of Liberalism, and we hope soon to clothe it with a fairer name. It is thought still more an intrusion that we make this unwelcome exhibition of our zeal at a time when the Government imagine that their opponents are a scattered and defeated party, crushed to the earth by wonder at their marvellous achievements in diplomacy and war. Well, perhaps an event that happened in Wiltshire two days ago may have pointed out to them that the English people do not necessarily hold precisely the same exalted estimate of what has taken place that they do. I think they



find that, however keen we may all be in unison with the views which we have heard from my gallant friend to-night, and however ready we may be to tender the homage of our unrestrained admiration for the valour shown in Egypt and the skill with which that valour has been guided, we cannot undertake to transfer bodily to Her Majesty's Government the whole of the merit acquired by our army. I think before that takes place this country will require to examine—and examine by the light of those feelings which are produced by the process of paying the bill—the policy by which the war in Egypt was rendered necessary, and later on to examine the results to which this expenditure of blood and treasure had led.

#### DUAL CONTROL.

Now, in speaking of the policy which has led to this war in Egypt, I do not think it necessary to notice the attempts which have been made by some minor organs of the Government to infer that what has happened at the end of 1882 was the necessary result of what was done in 1879. They will find that the system of government—or the system of financial administration I should rather say—we counselled the Khedive to set up, was one which Her Majesty's Government when they succeeded to office expressed their approval of, and was one which they could have altered or abandoned if they disapproved of it. The system of dual control, say some of the advocates of Her Majesty's Government, was one which it was impossible for the Government of Egypt to manage—it would necessarily overthrow them. You will have often noticed that if a horse and his rider unfortunately part company, it is always afterwards found to be the fault of the horse. But any such imputations are not, to do them justice, authorized by the heads of Government themselves. It was perfectly open to the Government to have abandoned the system if they found



it fraught with either inconvenience or danger. It is notorious that they approved of it from the first. I am not myself so far enamoured of it that I should now propose its restoration, but it was an expedient perfectly suited to the circumstances under which it was set up, and it might have been maintained for a very considerable time if there had been applied to it those qualities which are necessary to sustain any Oriental system of administration—namely, that the authority which was vindicated should be vindicated by force so soon as it was vindicated by words, and that no time should elapse between the utterance of defiance and its justification. That is the condition of the maintenance of authority in every Oriental country. If in India you were to deal with a rising against your authority by telling them in January you treated them as foes, and waited and took no action till May or June, you would speedily compromise your power of taking any action at all.

#### THE GOODWILL OF TURKEY.

But this lack of promptitude and vigilance, though, no doubt, it was one of those qualities which made the maintenance of the previous arrangement impossible, is not to my mind the only contribution which Her Majesty's Government have made to the catastrophe which we saw last summer. You may remember that when we had to deal with difficulties in Egypt our immediate course was to appeal to the suzerain Power, and we were able, by earnest appeals, no doubt, to influence the suzerain Power so far that necessary measures were taken for modifying the conditions of government, and that being done by the authority of the Sultan it commanded the assent of the Mussulman world. When Her Majesty's Government came into office they came weighted with the unlucky pledges which were delivered in this country. They came bound to shew hostility to the Government of Turkey, and

with the first diplomatic occasion that arose we were forced to fulfil the pledge. The difficulties of Montenegro and the difficulties of Greece were not matters that interested this country very largely. They could have been settled; it was easy to settle them at any moment you chose to do so, disregarding the wishes of the Sovereign of Turkey. But we never could venture on that course, because we knew that there were other problems and difficulties behind, which, if you made the Sovereign of Turkey your enemy, must lead you into formidable embarrassments. The key of this question of Egypt lay in those previous diplomatic communications with respect to Montenegro and to Greece. At the time it was thought a great triumph that those questions were settled so easily and so much to the satisfaction of the tribe and nation with whom many people in this country deeply sympathize. It was not sufficiently seen that the Government were setting against them the only Power that could help them to a pacific solution of any difficulties that might arise in Egypt.

#### THE JINGOES JUSTIFIED.

Well, then, look at another peculiarity of this Egyptian campaign. The first thing that strikes you when you look at it as a whole is wonder that Arabi Pasha, with his force and with his opportunities, should have defied as he did the power of such a country as Great Britain. How was that mystery to be solved? If any nation suffers itself to get into war with a weaker nation which is sufficiently civilized to know the great difference that exists between them, you may depend upon it that there is something in the conduct of that stronger nation which induces the weaker nation to believe that the larger country will never exert its strength. We have heard a great deal about *prestige*. I detest the word. It does not really express what we mean. I should rather

say "military credit." Military credit stands in precisely the same position as financial credit. The use of it is to represent a military power, and to effect the objects of a military power without the necessity of a recourse to arms. You know that the man possessed of great financial credit can perform great operations by the mere knowledge of the wealth of which he is master, and that it is not necessary to sell him up and ascertain if he is solvent and can pay 20s. in the pound in order to have the benefit of all the wealth he can command. It is the same with a military nation that is careful to preserve its military credit. If it does so, it may, without shedding one drop of blood or incurring one penny of expenditure, effect all the objects which, without that military credit, can only result in much waste of blood and treasure. Now we were in a position of a financial operator who had ruined his own credit by doubtful and dangerous operations. We had squandered our military credit at Majuba Hill, where we had taken up the position of a Power that was willing to submit to any insult that might be placed upon it. We had proclaimed to the world that we were not ready to fight for our military renown, and the tradition of our ancestors was lost in us. It was a false proclamation—a proclamation that the Ministry had no mandate from the nation to make, and which the nation, at the first opportunity, forced them to disavow. But the disavowal has cost blood and treasure which, if they had been more careful of the reputation of this country, need never have been expended. You know, gentlemen, that in times past, three years ago, those who maintained such doctrines and insisted on the necessity of the maintenance of your military credit as one of the most precious inheritances of the nation were denounced as "Jingoes." But these Jingoes are justified now. They have Her Majesty's Government for converts. They have forced Her Majesty's Government to

demonstrate in action that which is their principal contention, that if you suffer military credit to be obscured the fault must be wiped out in blood.

A LAST CHANCE FOR MR. GLADSTONE.

I feel how inadequate I am to deal with a question of this kind in such a place as this. I know it has been occupied by a much greater artist; and I feel that there has been a loss to the world of splendid specimens of political denunciation, because the misdeeds of the Ministry of 1882 are, unfortunately, not subject to the criticism of the orator of 1880. What magnificent lessons, what splendid periods of eloquence, we have lost! Just think that if Mr. Gladstone, when the spirit of 1880 was upon him, could have had to deal with the case of a Ministry professing the deepest respect for the Concert of Europe and the deepest anxiety to obey its will—a Ministry which, with those professions upon its lips, assembled a conference and kept it for months in vain debate, and, under cover of its discussions, prepared armaments, asked for leave to invade a country, and then, when a refusal was given and the armaments were ready, calmly showed the Conference to the door, and took, in despite of Europe's will, the country which they had asked the leave of Europe to take? If the orator of 1880 had had such a theme to dwell upon, what would he have said of disingenuousness and subtlety? Or, take another case, supposing that unequalled orator had had before him the case of a Government who sent a large fleet—a vast fleet—into a port where they had no international right to go, and when that fleet was there had demanded that certain arrangements should be made on land which they had no international right to demand, and when these demands were not satisfied had forthwith enforced that by the bombardment of a great commercial port, would you not have heard about political brig-

andage? What sermons you would have had to listen to with respect to the equality of all nations; of the weakest and the strongest before the law of Europe; what denunciations would you not have heard of those who could for the sake of British interests expose such a city to such a catastrophe, and carry fire and sword among a defenceless people.

A REMARKABLE COINCIDENCE.

That great artist drew a picture of Sir Frederick Roberts. I cannot help wishing that he had to draw a picture of Sir Beauchamp Seymour; but, allow me to say in passing, that if my poor pencil could be employed it would be drawn in nothing but the most flattering colours. I think if we can imagine anything so impossible as the orator of 1880 having to describe and comment on the events of 1882, that he would have noticed one of the most remarkable coincidences which the history of this country furnishes. It is a very curious fact that we have only had one member of the Society of Friends—commonly called on the Statute Book “Quakers,” so that I may use the word without offence—in the Cabinet. We have only had one Quaker; and only once in the history of the world, so far at least as this hemisphere is concerned, if I am not mistaken, has a great commercial city of the first class been subject to bombardment. It is a very remarkable fact that when the order was given to bombard that commercial city that Quaker was in the Cabinet. At all events, grave as these events have been, I think they will furnish some good fruit, at least, for the future. I hope we have taken a new departure in Liberal politics. I trust that for the future any Minister who cares about British interests and thinks it right to go to war in their defence will not be subject to denunciation on the part of the Liberal party for doing so. I am quite aware British interests were treated with scant respect in 1880. I am quite aware that Mr.



Gladstone denounced as monstrous the idea that we could claim to control a country, simply because it lay on our route to India. But if ever there was a war—I do not know what to call it—I believe it was not a war; but if ever there were sanguinary operations undertaken purely for the sake of British interests, undoubtedly these recent operations in Egypt have deserved the character. Well, then, again I trust that something has been added to our knowledge of the doctrine of national self-defence. You may remember that in the case of the Afghanistan and Zulu wars, we were denounced as unworthy of the slightest moral consideration; in fact, very much stronger words were used, because we maintained that it may be necessary, purely for purposes of self-defence, for a Power itself to strike the first blow and be technically the aggressor. If a preparation is being made in a foreign country that is by the side of your own, a preparation which threatens the security of your possessions, you are, we maintain, by the law of national self-defence, justified in using forcible means to bring that preparation to an end. That was the justification of the Zulu war. That was the justification of the war which we undertook in Afghanistan, because the Russian representative was admitted to the Court of Cabul while our own was driven back. But what was the justification of these operations which ended in the utter destruction of Alexandria? Why, that preparations were being made on land not belonging to us—preparations which, if prosecuted, might have compromised the safety of our fleet which chose to lie in the harbour, but which might have gone out of it if it pleased. After this precedent, it will be impossible for any Liberal Government to limit, as they have done in the past, the rights of national self-defence.

PREDOMINATE IN EGYPT.

With respect to the end of that war we have yet to wait. We do not know what the present negotiations may bring forth. We must suspend our judgment until we see what the result will be. I confess that I should be inclined to look on all these circumstances to which I have adverted with a very indulgent eye, if the result of the negotiations which are pending should be to extend the strength, the power, and the predominant influence of Great Britain—for I am old-fashioned enough to believe in that Empire and believe in its greatness. I believe that wherever it has been extended, it has conferred unnumbered benefits upon those who have been brought within its sway, and that the extension of the Empire, so far from being the desire of selfishness or acquisitiveness, as it has been represented to be—deserving to be compared to acts of plunder in private life—is in reality a desire, not only to extend the commerce and to strengthen the power of our Government here at home, but to give to others those blessings of freedom and order which we have always prized among ourselves. Let us therefore in the negotiations which are before us not be ashamed of our Empire. We are now the predominant Power in Egypt—the valour of our troops has made us so. Let us observe with rigid fidelity every engagement we have made with the amiable and respectable Prince who rules in Egypt, but as regards the other Powers of Europe let us follow our position to its logical result. We are the predominant Power. Why should we cease to be so? Why should we allow diplomacy to fritter away what the valour of our soldiers has won? If the Government act in that spirit there will be little inclination to scrutinize the steps of the policy by which the result was reached, but if they allow themselves to be made the mere tools of others,

if they act the part of mere thief takers to the Khedive of Egypt, and are satisfied with bringing this unlucky Arabi Pasha to trial ; if no greater or more solid benefit than that accrues from the loss of so many valuable lives and the spending of so much treasure, severe indeed will be the judgment of the people of this country on the Government to whom the result is due.

#### BENEFITS OF COERCION.

This matter of Egypt is in suspense, and so also is the other great difficulty with which the Government had to contend. They are proud of what they speak of as the improved condition of Ireland. I wonder whether it does not occur to them that both with respect to Egypt and Ireland, if there is an improved condition, it is due to the fact that they have repudiated and cast out the doctrine that "force is no remedy," and that they have listened to the advice which their political opponents have not ceased to tender them. We have maintained that no good could be done in Ireland, no matter what grievances you have to redress, unless the primary duty of Government was first discharged of maintaining order and performing justice. Now, they will tell you that the comparative quietude of Ireland is due to their remedial measures. Their remedial measures were introduced in the spring of last year. Ever since their introduction the outrages in Ireland have gone on in an increasing ratio until they culminated in the lamented death of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke. Then came the other policy ; then came a real genuine attempt to re-establish order and to enforce the administration of justice, and no sooner was that passed by Parliament and executed with even moderate firmness by the administration of the day, than at once outrages diminished, and the peace of Ireland began to amend. In the face



or these facts it is ridiculous to tell me that it is what they call the remedial measures of the Government that have produced the improvement of which they speak. I do not at all deny that it was very desirable to introduce remedial measures, but I should not have counselled the trying of remedial measures which have only had the effect of destroying all confidence in the country, and of driving capital from the land; I should not have counselled measures which destroy the confidence of every landholder in the security of his own property, and introduce causes of dispute between landlord and tenant. If you were to do anything which should be in the direction of an effort—no matter of how small a kind, because in such a matter you could not move fast—an effort to have bound to the fortunes of the Empire a larger proportion of the population by the links of ownership, I should have counselled such an effort. But, unfortunately, the hope of that has been dissipated by two causes. The fund from which it could have been done—the Irish Church Fund—has been sacrificed to an absurd Arrears Bill, and the tenants have been prevented from any effort to become owners by purchase by being offered a far more eligible fate. Nobody who can get his land by bullying will care to take it by buying. They have learnt the lesson that agitation will bring them what they want, and it will be a long time before they will unlearn that lesson and take a more humble and more honest course.

MR. GLADSTONE'S PROMISES.

We have before us those two difficulties of Egypt and Ireland which have not reflected much credit on the Government, and they have had to adopt modes of action borrowed very much from their political opponents, and that necessity will necessarily affect their policy in other matters. We have heard it said by distinguished authorities that there are Liberals and Liberals.

I should prefer to say that the Liberals are not a party, they are an alliance or a confederation, and it is necessary that each member of the alliance should have something in order to bind him to the common standard. Now, hitherto it has been one of the great merits of the present Prime Minister that he has been able, by vague and mysterious language, to insinuate promises which may go as far as your imagination pleases to wander, and yet if grammatically tested bind him scarcely to anything at all. Now, we have before us the instance of the unfortunate Quaker. I suppose if the election of 1880 conveyed any lesson at all, it was to assure members of the Society of Friends that they were safe for the future from all wars waged for the purpose of securing British interests or leaving open the route to India, and we see, by the secession of their eminent representative how deep their disappointment has been. I have no doubt if you examine the language of Mr. Gladstone you will find nothing in it which absolutely binds him to the construction of the Quakers. But that is the marvellous skill and cleverness of the man. He can "keep the word of promise to our ear, and break it to our hope." You remember what class of being it was said was capable of that performance. There are others who have been fed upon the same food, but have not yet been subject to that same disenchantment; we do not know what is reserved for them, whether that word of promise is to be kept to the ear or to the hope.

For instance, there are those who desire the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland. Read over the speeches of Mr. Gladstone, and they will certainly convey to you the idea that although he undertook that which it was not necessary he should undertake—not to disestablish the Church without a Parliamentary majority for the purpose of enabling him to do so—though he undertook expressly not

to smuggle the Church of Scotland out of existence, still his general intention was to accomplish that desirable reform whenever he had an opportunity. I have not a notion which of the two interpretations he intends in practice to give to his words, and I have a shrewd suspicion that he does not know any more than I do. He is perfectly ready to sail north or to sail south, but he cannot tell you what he will do until you tell him which way the wind will blow.

Well, then, there is the case of the farmer. He used language which may mean the rankest Communism, or may mean merely such mitigations of the law as few Conservatives would refuse to consider. It is impossible to know which of the two alternatives he will ultimately decide upon. But I am told that within the last few weeks the Government have shown a strong inclination to get up a small Ireland in the west of Scotland. I am not in the least surprised that they should do so. Ireland had been very useful to them, and if they can only multiply a country in which they might first say force was no remedy, and then afterwards, when it was quite evident that nothing would succeed but force, pass coercion measures, such countries will tend to the longevity of an administration, and will be multiplied by every Minister who respects the prospects of his own colleagues. I have no doubt that by refusing to the arm of the law and the desire of the Court of Session the necessary force, efforts will be made to get up that sort of question in the west of Scotland which may bring landlords generally into contempt, and may give the Government an opportunity of making those alternate displays of leniency and vigour which have conferred so many benefits on the Empire.

#### LOCAL COURTS IN IRELAND.

Well, then, the last specimen of this vague and mysterious language is a much more serious matter. It is

with respect to the future legislation for Ireland. Whenever there is a Parliamentary hitch, whenever the calculations of the whips have become nervously uncertain, Mr. Gladstone is always throwing out hints of his devotion to the cause of local government in Ireland, which his advocates in this country have interpreted to mean nothing but County Boards, but which the Irish members themselves have always taken as an encouragement to agitate for the disintegration of the Empire. And when the moment of decision comes, when it has to be determined whether it is County Boards or the disintegration of the Empire which has been promised, I will engage to you that Mr. Gladstone's words are so carefully poised, so judiciously vague, that no one should be able to say that he has been misconstrued. But is not that a cruel way to deal with the interests of that great land? In the firm belief of the Irish that the inhabitants of these islands mean to maintain the link between the two countries, unbroken and unimpaired, depends all hope of the restoration of order or the return to prosperity of that unhappy land. There is no worse service that Mr. Gladstone has performed to the future of the Empire over which he rules than the persistency with which he has used language to persuade the Irish that nothing is fixed, nothing is determined; that if they agitate enough, anything may be gained; that no question is ever fixed, that fatality is perpetually adjourned, and that if they will only press hard enough, the deepest interests of the Empire, the laws which concern its very existence, are matters for legitimate discussion. I confess I do not often envy the United States, but there is one feature in their institutions which appears to me the subject of the greatest envy—their magnificent institution of a Supreme Court. In the United States, if Parliament passes any measure inconsistent with the constitution of the country, there

exists a Court which will negative it at once, and that gives a stability to the institutions of the country which, under the system of vague and mysterious promises here, we look for in vain.

DRIFTING INTO SOCIALISM.

I have detained you a long time, but I am only trying to impress upon you this—you must not suppose that because in this matter of foreign policy the doctrines we have urged have been to a great extent accepted that there is no danger to be guarded against. In internal matters of legislation we do not know what the future may bring forth. We have no guide to enable us to interpret Ministerial promises. All that we know is that hitherto they have been restrained by no scruple with respect to ancient institutions, by no reverence for private right. They have freely abolished what was old. They have rendered nugatory rights which had existed from a far antiquity. They have cancelled contracts which were signed only yesterday. They have determined that rights which men had acquired in confidence of the promise of Parliament are of no avail, and are not to be respected; and only the other day they have made this further innovation upon our constitutional traditions, that for the first time they have limited the freedom of the councils of the nation. With these warnings before you, you would be indeed unwise if you relaxed your efforts or weakened your organization. Do not imagine, as many are forward to tell you, that those efforts have no hope and are a vain beating against the inevitable. I cannot admit that either with respect to the Conservative party generally or the Conservative party in Scotland. Generally we have this consolation, that we know that since Mr. Gladstone introduced his Land Bill we have won several seats, and we have not lost one; and we also know that in important matters of



policy the Government have found it necessary to borrow the principles of the Opposition. With respect to Scotland, I am told, and my noble friend beside me has repeated it, you are fighting an uphill fight. There is no doubt it is the case. It is a fight which will tax all your energies and claim all the efforts you can give to it; but it is not a fight without hope. Depend upon it, although you have to deal with a people who are singularly tenacious of an adverse proposition when they have once conceived it, yet you have also to deal with a people, probably above any other in Europe, shrewd and penetrating in their judgment. You must not believe that they will continue indefinitely to hold opinions in a changed condition of things, because those opinions were formed when matters were very different. They are quite keen enough to see that political names have altered their meanings, that political parties have changed their standpoints. The Liberal party is forced on by the very law of its existence. It is its constant boast to march constantly onwards. They call it progress, but they have not made up their minds to what goal Liberalism leads. Already they have traversed the field of the older Liberalism. They have passed from the land where they were under the shadow of the older doctrines of political economy and of freedom of contract. Before them lies the wide expanse of Socialism towards which they are drifting. By an inexorable law they must march onwards. Those who appeal to revolutionary instincts can do many things, but the one thing they cannot do is to halt. They must go on, they have already passed the border on many points. Their legislation in respect of Ireland, for instance, suffers from the Socialist venom. It will take some time, perhaps, before the people of Scotland are persuaded that the party which was their old favourite is so degenerated; time must elapse, perhaps generations must change, but in the long run I feel confident that the

people of Scotland will not accompany them on this dangerous enterprise. Already, from all I hear, there are signs of change. There is that most pregnant sign of all that the young are Conservative where the old are not—that is to say, that the men who are bound by their pledges and antecedents remain Liberal, and the men free to judge become Conservative. You may be sure that process will continue. It may not happen rapidly; it may happen slowly; but it will happen. They will turn from the party which is leading them to revolutionary projects inconsistent with the industrial well-being of society, and they will turn to that party to whom has fallen the defence of individual liberty and the rights of property, of the sacredness of religion, and of those institutions by which liberty, property, and religion have hitherto been so marvellously preserved.

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## WORDS OF WARNING.

(AT EDINBURGH, NOVEMBER 24, 1882.)

I have to express my sincere acknowledgments for the address which has just been presented to me, to Mr. Murray for the kind manner in which he has introduced the address of this city, and to you, ladies and gentlemen, for the very kind manner in which you have received me. It is a matter of great satisfaction to me to receive these evidences of Conservative activity and exertion in various parts of this populous and influential country, at a time which appears to me to be singularly important in our political history, and to engage, more, perhaps, than any time that I can remember, the sympathies and the earnest effort of every Conservative. It is said that the Ministry of the day are in the flood-tide of their fortune. I am a little sceptical of the confident assertion; but, be it true or false, it is a transitory phenomenon, having

little effect upon the deep political changes which are going on by the side of it. When parties are changing their character, political names are altering their significance. New questions are coming to the front, and new calls are being consequently made for Conservative self-devotion and activity. It is a very common thing for Liberal speakers to try to commend their cause to-day by references to what they are pleased to call the history of the success of their party in the past. That history is a little legendary. They are apt to claim for themselves the advantage of every good thing that has been done by anybody, and to ignore any mistakes or mishaps that may have happened to them in their career.

#### THE TWO PARTIES.

I am not going minutely to compare the performances of the two parties in the past. I am well satisfied with the record that we should have to show. In the matter of all the important legislation which affects the well-being of the community directly and the comfort and happiness of the individual we have no small performances to show, if we had nothing else to quote but the relaxation of the Criminal Code and the passing of the Factory Acts, the most beneficent act of legislation of this century. These things were the work of the Tory party, and on them alone I should be content to repose our claims. With respect to the great political changes both parties are very much on the same level. Up to the moment when a change became, for good or for evil, inevitable, both parties retained their preference for the state of things as it then existed. Neither party wished to abandon the system of protection or to accept the system of household suffrage till just on the eve of the change. It was imposed upon both of them simultaneously in each case by a power superior to their own. In each case the political opinions of the parties were adapted to the circum-



stances of the times. But the character of the parties in the past seems to me, in the present state of our politics in this country, to be a wholly irrelevant consideration. What we have to deal with is not the past but the present. The identity of present parties with the parties of past times is a matter with regard to which some curious controversy might be raised. I never quite understand how the Liberal party—of which not only the men have changed, but all the principles have changed—can be precisely identical with the Liberal party of the past. On this matter of identity we know that the distinguished statesman who is at the head of Her Majesty's Government, entertains very curious opinions. He appears entirely to forget that his opinions are not precisely identical with those which he entertained when he was a young man. I remember that on one occasion, in a general denunciation of the Tory party, he quoted what was said of the Tory Government of 1834—that the Governments of Russia and Austria rejoiced at its advent to power, but that every friend of liberty repined. He entirely forgot that he was a member of that Tory Government of 1834. And so, I think, when the Land Bill was introduced last year, he denounced with great vigour the wickedness of Parliament in having conferred, as he expressed it, behind the backs of the Irish tenants, the power of eviction on the landlords. They did this in the year 1860, when Mr. Gladstone was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and was consequently the dominant authority of the House of Commons. But this identity, which in the course of his constant transformations he seems to have forgotten in his own person, he is anxious to proclaim for the party to which he belongs.

#### THE RADICAL PARTY.

I entirely dispute the claim to that identity. The Whigs and Tories in the past have fought with each

other, have criticized and condemned each other. But that was no more than the maintenance of the particular principles of government to which they were attached, and a criticism of the acts of the party to which they were opposed. Solely or greatly under the influence of the Prime Minister, a change has come over the action of English parties. The Radical party has come to the front, a party whose power feeds and depends on the existence of discontent. And as the power depends upon the existence of discontent, so they are not only quick to find it out, but eager to encourage and to promote it when it does appear. If they find anywhere a crack that is tending to divide two classes in the community, they hasten to drive in the wedge and to split it into a chasm. Their office, their function, seems to be to exasperate every animosity between class and class, to fan it into flame, and derive for it that electoral support which is the object of their industry and their action. Of course, I have no doubt they will tell you that their mission is to hear of grievances and to obtain their redress. Yes; but a party whose mission it is to live entirely upon the discovery of grievances are apt to manufacture the element upon which they subsist. It is very good that crimes, if they exist, should be informed against and public justice should act against them; but still the common informer is a common nuisance. Some time ago in London there was a man brought up for the crime of arson, and he was discovered to pursue this curious industry. It was the practice of the police to give every man half-a-crown who should be the first to inform them of any fire that might occur. The practice of this man was first to set fire to a building and then to rush off to the police and earn half-a-crown for informing them of the fire. Now, that is precisely the position of the Radical party in this country. It is, no doubt, their function to detect and redress grievances, but if you watch them you will observe that their entire industry is

devoted to the aggravating and inflaming of any animosities or grievances that may exist. Now, gentlemen, this party is a very different thing from the old Whigs and Tories. It is a party whose action cannot in any State be continued for any length of time without seriously compromising that unity between the various classes of the State, on condition of which alone a great Empire can be sustained. And let me say to those who are liable to suffer by this peculiar form of political activity, which has been developed into the foundation of a party in our time, that it tells more severely against the humbler classes of society than against the richer. Among their favourite topics are those subjects which may tend to inflame the poorer and the well-to-do against each other. The great man who is at the head of the Ministry is not entirely above this weakness. I remember that when the issue of the last election was announced, he very assiduously took credit to himself because he was opposed in London, where, he said, wealth was produced, and in Westminster, where wealth was expended.

#### PEACE AND CONFIDENCE.

Now, it is quite right for a statesman to be forward in defence of the poor, and no system of political opinion which is not just as between rich and poor can hope to survive in this country. But it does not follow that a man is doing any service to his country, or is in any way serving the interest of the poorer class, by setting rich and poor against each other. Consider what it is that really concerns the industrial members of the society, whether they are workmen or whether they are tradesmen. Great political measures touch them little; even if the property of the rich could be divided with the poor, how little value would it be to each individual workman or shopkeeper in this great country! What is of all things important to

them is that capital should flow, that employment should exist, that wages should fertilize the channels of commerce. But capital will not flow unless there is confidence, and every system of political doctrine which tends to create animosities between the various classes of society is directed full against that confidence which is vital to the existence of industry. In order that capital may flow, in order that enterprise may exist, enterprise must be free and enterprise must be secure. There are plenty of people who are willing enough to spend money in idle luxury, instead of investing it in such a way as to cause employment of labour and the general growth of the wealth of the community; and in precise proportion as the free flow of capital is discouraged that tendency will gain strength. Look what it is in other countries—Asiatic countries, where government is notoriously insecure. There you find the greatest possible luxuries and the absolute absence of enterprise. Men who possess capital only hasten to enjoy it, because they know they cannot trust their government, and that if they were to try and increase their capital by remunerative and profitable employment, they would run a great chance of losing all. Now, of course, I am only indicating to you a dangerous tendency. We know very well that our social forces in this island are as yet too strong to allow any such dangerous results to follow to any perceptible degree; but if you wish to see what is the real tendency of such treatment look at the sister country—look at the state of Ireland. Whenever the Liberals ask you to listen to them on the ground of their present achievements, just consider the case of Ireland. Ireland as it is is a Liberal creation. I know there is a popular belief that Oliver Cromwell and William of Orange were Tories; but it is not true. The Whigs imposed those restraints upon the industries of Ireland of which we have heard so much complaint. The Liberals during the past

century have had the control of almost every measure designed for the improvement or the alleviation of the condition of Ireland. It was the Liberals who passed the Encumbered Estates Act, which expropriated the old families of the land and drew the commercial investor in land—that very man whose misdeeds they now profess to denounce and whom they have calmly deprived of his property.

## FREEDOM OF CONTRACT.

Well now, in Ireland you have had a policy which, in my belief, was objectionable from two very different points of view, and in very different degrees. The land policy of the present Government is objectionable in the first instance because it interferes seriously with freedom of contract. Do not understand me to say that that of itself is necessarily a fatal objection. I am quite aware that Parliament claims, and must always claim, a right to interfere and dictate the circumstances of contracts if it thinks fit. But though it has done so—sometimes wisely, sometimes foolishly—the tendency of modern science and experience has been to discourage the exercise of that power to the utmost possible extent. That very law to which I have just referred—the Factory Act—was an interference with freedom of contract; a most beneficial and wise interference; but, on the other hand, you have such an interference as the Usury Laws, which were abandoned by universal consent because they had not fulfilled any of the objects for which they were set up. I think it may be said generally—but of course there are exceptions—that when the questions of life or limb or health are at issue, Parliament does wisely to interfere with freedom of contract. But when it is a question of money, when it is a question of what men should commercially gain or lose by a bargain, Parliament had better let



grown-up men settle with each other their own bargains, and that any interference on which it ventures is likely to be injurious to both parties. Of course, the chief evil—that is, the result of interference with freedom of contract—is to discourage the industry which these contracts affect. Men will not invest their money and they will not run the risk or give their labour if their efforts are thwarted in this direction or in that by the ignorant interference of a power which frequently does not understand the condition of the industry with which it meddles ; and the other evil is that there will be a constant effort to evade the interference of Parliament, or rather there will be a constant effort to get out of the conditions to which the law applies. Now, see what Parliament has done for Ireland. It has laid down a Land Law, which settles on what conditions the people are to take the land, settles for the tenant, and settles for the landlord by a number of minute and, in my judgment, very vexatious regulations. But, of course, it was impossible to carry that prohibition, that restriction, to the largest class of holdings. The theory was that the Irish peasant was a mild, gentle, exceedingly simple individual, who was perfectly unable to take care of himself, and who required the interference of these gentlemen at Westminster to settle on what terms he was to pursue his industry. Even if that were true, it obviously was not true of the grazier who held land to the value of £150 or £200 a year or more. Parliament has had to allow those who hold on that level—I think the limit is £150 a year—to contract themselves out of the Act. Now mark the result of that, because it is an instructive instance of the danger of interfering with freedom of contract. Every landlord knows that if he could get his land into blocks forming farms worth £150 a year, he could get himself out of the vexatious restrictions of the Land Act. Well, of course there will be

many landlords who will not take any advantage of the law and will be kindly to their tenants, though it be to their own hindrance; but you must not count on sentiment of that kind. The only wise legislation is the legislation that assumes that every man will act according to his own interests, and so in a great many instances—in the instances of weaker and poorer men who are struggling for their lives and who depend on their estates for the maintenance and the education of their families—you will find that they will take advantage of every relief that the law can give them. If a man of that kind were to go to his man of business and say, "What should I do to get out of the restrictions and privations that this Land Act imposes upon me?" the man of business would reply, "Why, you will watch your tenants carefully, and the moment a man is in arrear with his rent, you will get rid of him. You should evict him without mercy, and then, when you have brought together a sufficient number of holdings to make up farms of £150, you will be free from the operation of this Land Act." I do not hold up such conduct to you as humane or laudable, but I point out to you the effect of this Act, judging it upon those principles of human conduct—those principles of self-interest which legislation must take as its guide. The effect of it is to make it the direct and imperious interest of the landlords of Ireland to insist upon those very evictions to which we are told the whole misery of the population is due. That is the effect of interfering with the natural freedom of contract.

#### SPOILIATION.

But there is much worse than this in the legislation of Irish land. To interfere with the freedom of future contracts is well within the jurisdiction of Parliament; but to take a contract that already exists, and say that one side of it shall keep all the advantages and the other shall have all the sacrifices of

advantages, that is not within the competence of Parliament to exact. What do you imagine the effect would be? Suppose you bought a cow, and Parliament comes down and says, "You have bought that cow. You shall keep your cow, but only pay one-third or three-fourths of the price." What do you suppose the effect of that enactment would be upon the man who sold the cow? Very naturally he would never care to trouble himself with selling cows again, and would keep himself well out of the way of the spoliating action in Parliament. That is what has happened with respect to the land in Ireland. Parliament invited men to come into the land. By the passing of the Encumbered Estates Act and other Acts it avowedly encouraged men to come and invest their savings in the purchase of land, and then, when they bought that land, it says, "The tenant shall keep the land, but you shall only have one-third or three-fourths of the rent." The effect of that, for which present expediency may be pleaded in its behalf, must be fatal to the future prosperity of the country. Every man knows this action of the Government is not the limit to which those under whose influence it is acting would wish it to go. While the Government is taking a third or a quarter, Mr. Davitt is going about preaching that it ought to take the whole. Well, in these circumstances, do you think that men are likely to invest their money in the improvement of land? Do you think they are likely to carry their capital to a country where such things occur? I lately saw a letter from Mr. Mitchell Henry, a Liberal gentleman, but a very philanthropic one, pointing out the enormous wealth that might be made by the application of money to the improvement of Irish bogs. Mr. Bright is very fond of dwelling on the water-power of Loch Corrib, and the wonderful results that would come to Ireland if that water-power could be utilized. Well, we had the other day a letter from a



gentleman in the West of Ireland, giving a piteous account of the misery of whole districts, and one of the causes that he assigned why there was now no remunerative employment for these was the natural penalty which follows upon a land that is so afflicted when a Government, whose first duty it is to protect property, instead of that, becomes the spoliator of property in its turn. The agitators may tell you that it is the rich man, or comparatively rich man, who is in question, and that it is he who will suffer from the effect of such laws; but commercial laws are pitiless in their action. It is not the rich man who will mainly suffer. When confidence is destroyed capital will not flow, enterprise cannot be created, wages must fall, and commerce must stagnate; and when the Government, under pressure of electoral motives, commits a breach of the rights of property, depend upon it in the long run the class which lives by industry will be the sufferer, because the Government has departed from the right way.

#### THE STATE CHURCH.

There is another matter to which I should like to refer, because it is a question which justifies, I think, the activity and the energy of these associations whose addresses have been kindly presented to me, and which is likely to occupy in a very early time the attention of Scotchmen—I mean the Established Church of this country. Now, remember, you are constantly told that the distinction between the Conservative and the Liberal party is that the Liberals are the party of progress and the Conservatives desire to stand still. We know very well we live in a changing world, but all that we say is, before great changes are made in the fundamental laws and institutions of this country, and the principles which have been handed down for a long time, let us be certain that the change

commends itself to the settled will and judgment of the people of this country, and is not adopted in obedience to the wishes of a chance majority. But when the Liberals tell you they are the party of progress, is it impertinent to ask them where they are progressing to? A man may tell you that he is a great walker, and is going on a profitable journey; but if you asked him where he was going to and he was unable to say, you would think he was a very odd sort of undertaker. Where is the point to which this progress is to lead? I suppose there is some fixed point at which everybody, according to this hypothesis, would be a Conservative. What we wish to know is the point to which the Liberals desire to go, and there is no matter in respect to which this frankness would be more desirable than in regard to this question of the Established Church. Now, how has the question arisen? Some 30 or 40 years ago, owing to a very unfortunate decision on the part of a nobleman to whom Conservatives did not look with much affection, the great schism of the Free Church occurred. But in the first instance it was a matter of purely religious concern, with which politicians were not required to trouble themselves. The Free Church fully recognized that it was the duty of the State to maintain an Established Church, but then came into the agitation the missionaries of discontent. Then came in that party who live by creating division between various classes of Her Majesty's subjects. They have turned this religious issue into a political one, and now the political conflict in Scotland threatens the subversion of the most ancient institution of Scotland—one closely bound up with all the vicissitudes of fortune of the country. It is not necessary that I should dilate to you upon the advantages of an Established Church. You know that it is at once the great security for the presence of religious ministrations

alike in rich and in poor districts, and at the same time, it is a security that the great influence of the Church shall be exercised in a manner that is advantageous and in harmony with the welfare of the State. I do not for a moment say that the Church cannot exist without the State. I know well that it is otherwise. But a Church divorced from the State runs two risks. There is always the risk that the individual ministers will be tempted, perhaps forced, to excite the zeal and to secure the support of their particular congregations by the constant administration of unwholesome spiritual stimulants; and there is another danger—that the Church itself will not be subject to that modifying influence of the laity, so favourable to toleration and to breadth, which is the result of the influence which the Establishment confers upon the State. The loss of connection with the State will be the loss of great power for good and the loss of a security that the influence of the Church will be constantly exercised with wisdom and with moderation. I am more concerned to call your attention to the dangers which these great and venerated institutions may run at this time. You were told again and again at the last election that the issue of disestablishment was not immediately before the country, and that the country would be consulted again before such an issue could be dealt with, but the point that I think was not sufficiently considered by those to whom the Established Church is precious in this country is that if you place in power the enemies of the Established Church, even though they may not at once proceed to the exercise of that power to its detriment, you place in their power the opportunity of so modifying and manipulating electoral arrangements that at a future time the Church would be at their mercy.

## ELECTORAL UNITY AND ACTIVITY.

I can see that those desiring disestablishment, both in this country and across the border, are supporting the present Government in spite of many discouragements, in spite of being compelled very often to eat their principles and to approve of that which they should denounce. They hope that from this Government may proceed some manipulation of the machinery by which Parliaments are elected which enable them in the future to attain their ends. It is against that you have to guard; that is the necessity to guard against. The result of any particular election is the great danger which requires the constant attention of Conservatives. To those who consider the state of our institutions at this time, and the spirit which now dominates the conduct of affairs, it is alarming to see how great their insecurity and instability are. Everything depends on the results, whatever they may be, of the chance humour or the pleasing caprice of that one day on which a general election is held. You know what a general election is. You know the kind of questions which affect this or that constituency. You know how one constituency votes this way or that way because a particular harbour has not been made; another constituency is animated by the temperance movement; another by the anti-vaccination movement; a fourth by a fondness for some local dignitary; and a fifth by the unpopularity of some particular local dignitary. And there are a thousand other secondary motives or transient motives, even be they of momentary importance, which go to make up the decision on which the proudest of your institutions may depend. You never know when the danger may be upon you. You never know when the moment for exertion may arise; but you know that great institutions, such as your ancient Church of Scotland, are in the hour of an election com-

mitted to your keeping; that if you then neglect your trust, evils follow that you cannot repair; and I know no stronger incentive to that energy and activity of which these addresses I have now received bear such distinguished evidence than the consideration that upon the industry with which they pursue the means with which they achieve the great objects for which they exist will depend the averting of the danger that we all of us dread to look upon—the saving of institutions which generations have looked upon with respect, the prevention of results which the latest generation of their descendants may regard with deep regret, but which no subsequent efforts shall have the power to reverse. Gentlemen, I feel that on this side of the border the exhortation to electoral union and to electoral activity is invested with even more importance than any words that could be uttered in England, because here the danger is more immediate and greater interests are at issue. When you are asked to help, when you are asked to join in the efforts which other Conservatives are making, remember that upon your refusal or upon your cordial acquiescence depends whether or not you will bear a worthy part in defending that institution which all Scotland is bound to honour and revere.

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### *THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH.*

(AT DALKEITH, NOVEMBER 26, 1882).

[On the occasion of the presentation to the Countess of Dalkeith of a portrait of her husband, the defeated candidate at the Midlothian Election, 1880.]

As an old friend for many years of the noble duke, and as a member of the Conservative party, I have been permitted to say a few words—and they shall be very few—in support of this motion [complimentary to the

Duke of Buccleuch] which has been now submitted to you. In appearing before this audience it is difficult not to remember that this particular hall has within the last two or three years acquired a historical reputation in reference to enterprises that were undertaken in this county against the influence and family of the Duke of Buccleuch, and in reference to certain very remarkable, and striking, and influential sentiments which were addressed to audiences here. They were shown to me this morning. If I were to repeat them here, I am afraid you might think they were so incongruous with the present state of affairs that I was laughing at you.

MR. GLADSTONE'S MIDLOTHIAN SPEECHES.

I remember noticing that it was in this hall that the most thrilling, the most pious denunciations were levelled against those who pointed the terrible implements of modern artillery against uncivilized races. I wonder if it crossed the mind of the distinguished orator who uttered these sentiments that within three years he would be directing those who served the Queen to point far more terrible implements of artillery against the uncivilized races in another part of Africa. And there was also a sentiment about burning villages which took very much at the time—an appeal to the ladies of this county to think of the fearful sufferings of those who were turned out of their villages and of the guilt of those whose warlike operations led to the destruction of those villages. I wonder if it occurred to him that it would be his fate within three years to direct military operations which would have the effect of burning, not villages, but one of the proudest cities of the earth, and to initiate operations of which the effect would be the appalling misery that results from turning on the world the inhabitants—the peaceful inhabitants—of a vast city. I do not, of course, refer to these



things for the purpose of insinuating that any moral guilt lies upon the right hon. gentleman. I do not think so, but I think that events will prove to him and to you, and possibly will prove to others in this part of the county, that those pious and noble sentiments were uttered a little recklessly and hastily, that they were not really a just foundation for the measureless denunciations which were delivered at the time against the Government that then ruled in this country and at those who, like my noble friend and the noble duke, supported it, and that men will learn not to trust entirely to the effusiveness and the seeming religiousness of political denunciations, but to measure their just application to the facts before them. However, the matter which I wish to press upon your attention is of a more peaceful kind. I desire rather to dwell, not upon the defects of his assailants, but upon the individual merit of the noble duke himself. As a politician, he occupies a remarkable and very distinguished position. His career, if you will examine it, has a remarkable merit of judgment and moderation, and far-sightedness which few of the passing generation of statesmen have imitated. At the great crisis of the Corn Laws in 1845, it was given to him, I think almost alone among the Ministry of Sir Robert Peel on the one hand, to see that the position of agricultural protection was not tenable and was one which ought not to be defended, and on the other hand to see that the difference from his party in that respect was no sort of justification for changing all his other opinions on all other political matters whatever. And, therefore, it was he, I think, alone, who, while joining the Ministry of Sir Robert Peel in that which was a right and necessary act, when that controversy was over quietly took his place in the ranks again by the side of those to whom his former opinions had always united him. Many, too many, of his colleagues, and Mr. Gladstone at their head, appeared to find

in that one difference of opinion a justification for renouncing all that they had ever supported and supporting all that they had formerly opposed. It is no slight merit in a statesman that he was able to resist the alluring example of so many distinguished colleagues, and to draw the line between adhering to doctrines that were obsolete and untenable and the opposite excess, to which so many of his friends rushed, of throwing over and changing their political convictions altogether. What he has been in public he has been in private—the same calm, moderate, equable, just, and energetic man. I need not dwell upon his private virtues to you, for they are well known to you by personal experience; but it is impossible not to see in the influence which through a long life he has maintained a testimony to the virtues by which that influence has been deserved. In some other lands it might be said his rank and his great wealth were of some account in the power he had obtained and the attachment that was tendered towards him; but in modern Scotland, at least, that is not the case. Here, I believe, in this thriving and busy population, where the constant creation of wealth tends to stimulate the sentiment of equality; here, I believe, if we have a man who has great wealth and rank, and at the same time preserves a vast influence and popularity, it is a conspicuous proof of the personal merits by which that popularity was earned. Through a long life he has devoted himself with unflagging and ungrudging labour to the various and complicated duties which his high position has imposed upon him, and he has obtained as his reward a widespread attachment which it has been given to few to obtain, but fewer still to deserve.



*CENTRALIZATION.*

(ON RECEIVING THE FREEDOM OF THE CITY OF EDINBURGH,  
NOVEMBER 27, 1882.)

In expressing my most deep and sincere gratitude for the great honour which has just been conferred upon me, I feel that if anything could have added to its value in my eyes it is the kind words with which the Lord Provost has accompanied it. It is no slight satisfaction to me that at such a time he should have recalled to my mind that my family is associated with much that is dearest to Scottish memory, and that those who love Scotland best may look back to the work of my ancestors for no inconsiderable portion of the blessing of the heritage which she enjoys. It is, indeed, no slight honour to be associated with the distinguished men who have received, and received with gratitude, the recognition of this great city, for this city occupies a position unparalleled in the world in its peculiar character. It is not only its splendid external aspect, it is not only that it is associated with the most historical associations, that it occupies a chief place in a nation, and that it has left its work so deeply graven on the world's history, but by the side of all this political and historical eminence it has an unexampled position in history and philosophy. The Lord Provost read over to you a list of names which certainly no other capital in Europe could surpass in the peculiar lines of thought and literary industry to which they devoted themselves, and the reflection of their intellect and their glory sheds a lustre on this city, and communicates a value to all the honours that it confers. The Lord Provost was kind enough to refer to my political past. I am well aware that he did so in a neutral and indulgent spirit, and that I will not obtain from him or from you an agreement on

many, perhaps, as it may seem to them, peculiar views that I entertain; but I should be sorry if it were believed—indeed, I think it is utterly untrue—that the contentious matters in party politics exhaust the public questions on which citizens may feel a common interest. No doubt, the very vehemence of our contests seems to lend an extreme importance to them in our eyes—an importance which very often we may foresee that posterity will wonder at. But, however important they may really be, there are side by side with them questions not less important, questions not less dear, movements to nations not less momentous, upon which all parties may think together and work together. We are all divided on questions of property, on questions of religion; but, deeply as we contest these, perhaps we hardly notice the changes that are constantly going on, not impeded by the force of political movement or the strength of any political party, but working as naturally in the body politic as changes going on in the natural body, and changes which may import more to the future life of the nation than matters that are anxiously contested.

#### TWO ANTAGONISTIC FORCES AT WORK.

Among them it seems to me there is one question, one matter, with regard to which the city of Edinburgh holds a special position, and, like all who hold the foremost position, incurs thereby a special responsibility and duty. There are two forces—two antagonistic forces—at work in our body politic, changing its character and affecting its destiny. There is the old local liberty and old local self-government, in which men, each in their own localities, decide the vast mass of the questions in which their lives are interested; and there is against that the constant tendency to the aggregation of power in the central place of rule, that which, in the language of the day, we call centralization, which in other countries has worked

more powerfully than in our own, and has worked with baneful effect, but which in this country is ever at work, and is producing constant modifications in the relations of citizens to each other and the various parts of the country to the Government of the centre. Now, it seems to me that in this matter a city like Edinburgh—a city that in the past represented an independent kingdom, and now represents an independent kingdom, but in which the great majority of the governing actions of the community are no longer carried on—has a particular responsibility and duty. This process of centralization is not the fault of any one party; it goes on, apparently, in spite of both parties. The way in which it works is not observed. The statesmen who take office under any Government are naturally actuated by a desire to mark their term of office by measures beneficial to their country, and in order to frame those measures they must take the advice and accept the assistance of the permanent officials who constitute the central department. It is in the nature of every human being to think that he himself is the best person to decide on the questions which have to be decided upon. That is a failing from which even those distinguished men who constitute our permanent and official Government staff are not entirely free. The result is that the measures, as they come forward, contain in some of their details, not very generally conspicuous, provisions which subsequently tend to diminish the independence and self-government of the localities distant from London, and, in fact, of London itself, and to increase the amount of power which is placed in the hands of the central Executive Government. The effect is not much in each individual measure, but it all tends the same way. Each successive statesman, each successive Minister contributes his little mite to the heap, till it attains at last a towering proportion, and the result is that in

many matters—in the expenditure of public money, in the supervision of public works, in the administration of local justice, in the management of local, sanitary, and other affairs, there is a constant tendency to increase the power of those who are at the centre and diminish the power of those who are in the locality. Now, this, apart from any party question, is a very serious evil. The evil is of two kinds. In the first place, the work in the long run is not so well done. It is done more scientifically at first, no doubt. But it is done in formulas. Your case must fit formula A, formula B, or formula C; if it does not fit into one of those three formulas so much the worse for you. There is no elasticity about it. You are handed over to that great modern dictator who is spread over the world under the name of “inspector”—a power whom I should describe, if I were to set up a temple, by setting up an image made in wood and clothed in red tape—and the result is that there is much less freedom and elasticity in the application of general rules when they are applied on a vast scale from the centre than if they were to be applied each according to their particular circumstances in a locality.

#### THE POWER BEHIND THE MINISTER.

But there is in my mind a greater evil; the loss of the power of government in small local affairs is a loss in the education of the people. Unless men are trained by some work touching the government of their fellow-men, no matter in how humble a fashion, unless they have something of that training, they are likely to be swayed by any theory that may be offered, and public opinion becomes worthless. They are of no use to control those who are over them. They are of no use as a tribunal of final appeal. We live in an age when the land is full of wild teachers, and our only security that the

calm commonsense view of extravagant theories shall be taken is that the people shall be practised—no matter in how limited a capacity—in their daily life in the government of their fellow men. It is only on the condition that the education is kept up living and constant, that the reality of our institutions can be maintained. I have referred to foreign countries before. You have only to look to France, where it has been the effort of statesmen to diminish the power of the provinces and increase the power of the central Government. The consequence is that the establishment of free institutions is accompanied by constant risk and the greatest instability and danger. I have thought I might make these remarks as the first specimen of my services as a guild brother, because I feel that it is on communities such as this that the foremost duty of defending local independence and local self-government should fall. It is vain for you to appeal to your political machinery, it is vain for you to ask either party of the State to help, as we find that every statesman who holds a particular Bill is in the hands of a permanent official. He, by the etiquette of political life, is master of his department, and his colleagues cannot interfere with him. If he has a majority in the House of Commons, that majority blindly follows him; but at the end of the day, although not seen, the permanent official wields the whole power of the State. If you mean to resist his well-intentioned and beneficent, but most insidious and dangerous influence, you must take that duty upon yourselves, and insist that, as our State grows, as new functions are created, as new and beneficial laws are passed, the first duty of assigning the management of those laws and the control of those new institutions shall be reserved to the population in the locality, and that the principle of local self-government, which lies at the base of our old institutions, shall be at the base of our new institutions also. I have only in



conclusion to repeat how deeply I feel the kindness with which this honour has been bestowed upon me by you, and the kindness of the language in which it has been conveyed to me by the Lord Provost, and to add that I shall deeply cherish the recollection of this day to the end of my life.

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## *THE IRISH DIFFICULTY.*

(AT HITCHIN, DECEMBER 7, 1882.)

I thank you most sincerely for the heartiness with which you received the toast of "The House of Lords," and me as its representative. I hope that in time to come the House of Lords may fulfil the auguries which have been formed of it and prove a valuable bulwark to the Constitution. There is no doubt that times of trial are in store for it. There is a probability of greater activity of legislation on the part of the Lower House—legislation in a direction which we have too much reason to fear will be subversive; and the circumstances which that legislation will cause to arise will furnish a severe trial for the prudence and courage of the House of Lords, to which let us hope it will be equal. Of course, it is difficult to foresee the precise course which in the impending session legislation may take. We have passed three sessions of Parliament, and if you ask what we have done, the answer can be given in the one word, Ireland. Ireland has occupied practically the whole time of Parliament since this Parliament assembled, and for what I can see Ireland will occupy the whole time of Parliament until it is dissolved. At all events, I am unable to join with those who see such a remarkable improvement in the condition of the country as to hope that it will free the Imperial Parliament from the necessity of further concerning itself with its

affairs. A short time ago the Government were disposed to boast of the diminution of agrarian crime, but only two days back we have heard from a Judge upon the Bench that the diminution is more apparent than real and has taken place merely in the item of threatening letters, which a few months ago Mr. Gladstone assured us were not serious offences, but that was when they were numerous; and other indications are not more reassuring.

THE PROSECUTION OF MR. DAVITT.

We have been in State prosecutions before, and we have now one on hand—a State prosecution of a most remarkable character. That Mr. Davitt should be prosecuted for seditious language is certainly one incident of which no patriotic citizen can complain. But though the particular language uttered by him seems to be very worthy of the notice of the Executive, the mode in which the prosecution has been brought to bear does appear to me singularly unfortunate and circuitous. We have had a Coercion Act in which it was perfectly possible to introduce any provisions necessary for punishing seditious speeches made in Ireland. Mr. Davitt was not a man who had at all concealed the nature of his opinions and his mode of political action, and it was easy enough to foresee the kind of language which he and his companions would be likely to use. It appears, however, that this Act of last session is of no use for the purpose of suppressing seditious speeches such as Mr. Davitt has made, but they had been obliged to disinter a statute passed in the 10th and 11th of the reign of Charles I., by which they can require a man to give security for his good behaviour, and if he does not give it, imprison him for an unlimited time. I have not made any particular researches with regard to the matter, but if I remember right the 10th and 11th of Charles I. was passed during the viceroyalty of



Strafford. It is generally said by historians—and indeed he lost his head partly for that reason—that Strafford's government of Ireland was slightly arbitrary; but now that the most Liberal Government that ever existed have shown this marked preference for his methods, I suppose historians will revise their judgment. At all events, it must be confessed that this mode of keeping the peace by way of antiquarian research is likely to give a stimulus to a very interesting study. If you once set antiquarian lawyers to work there is no knowing what precedents you may find in the Statute Book, and, I daresay, among many other precedents that come down from Charles I., there are some which the Government would find most useful in the control of Ireland. It is my impression, and I believe, that the power of the Star Chamber has never been abolished in Ireland, and if that be the case the Government, no doubt, in the full integrity of their conscience, may find an admirable weapon at hand, and, if they use it, we shall be told that though in a Tory Government it would be the depth of wickedness, in a Liberal Government it is only the inspiration of genius and philanthropy. This Government came in as the champions of peace, liberty, and retrenchment. We have seen them already this year as the champions of peace; we see them now as the champions of liberty; and next April many persons will receive a small bit of paper which will show them in the character of champions of retrenchment.

#### UNCERTAINTY IN IRELAND.

But I cannot help thinking that there is another lesson to be drawn from the persistence of this evil state of things in Ireland. All these efforts that are made with various descriptions of refinement or brutality by those who affect to improve the condition of the Irish people have but one object in view. Whether it be the murderer on the hill-side, the utterer of

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seditious speeches, or the more prudent and cautious organiser of obstruction in Parliament, they all have this one object in view—to make England so weary of Irish connection that Irish independence shall be conceded. That is the point at which they aim. But what is it that has given them this encouragement of late years? What is it that has encouraged them to believe that an object so deeply hostile to the interests of this Empire, so contrary to the pledges of English statesmen, is attainable? It is that they have found that upon matters which seemed at one time even more unchangeable, the application of agitation has effected a marvellous change in the convictions of English statesmen. My friend, Mr. Heathcote, referred in just terms to the land legislation with regard to Ireland. I do not wish to refer to it as a private wrong, though there is a great deal to be said on that subject; but I want to call attention to its effect on public policy. For centuries the English Government has stood steadily by the rights of private property. It has shown up to a very recent time no faltering or hesitation upon that subject. Five years ago any one who accused the Liberal party of the possibility of such legislation as that recently sanctioned would have been treated as a libeller. Nothing whatever has entered more deeply into the convictions of English statesmen and legislators than that you must not use Parliament for the purpose of transferring property from one set of men to another set of men without compensation. But if this has been changed, what is likely to be the effect upon men outside, men who do not know the particular characters of English statesmen and the springs which work English Parliaments? On the question of the connection of England with Ireland, England has altered her mind two or three times. On the question of private property she has never altered until this time. “If, under the influence of agitation, seditious speeches, murders, tactics of obstruction,

England has yielded up her convictions in matters as to which she was hitherto unshaken, is there not hope," these men will say, "if we are only consistent and unscrupulous enough, that we shall force her to yield in a matter upon which we know from history that she has not always held so unfaltering a course?" And if this feeling has been entertained, it has been greatly stimulated by the language proceeding from the Prime Minister indicating that the account was not closed; that there was still something to be done; that upon points indefinitely indicated the Government were still open to conviction from Irish agitators. Why, even in this matter of the valuers, which is not a large matter—it is merely an arrangement for informing by skilled testimony those to whom the property of their fellow-subjects was given over by form of law—even in this matter, having allowed the valuers to be appointed, they waited until the pressure of agitation came, and then, without pretending that their opinions were altered, they dismissed them at the bidding of agitators. That is a small thing, though I believe it to be unjust to a class, but it is far more dangerous when one step after another is a proclamation to Irish agitators that the Government of England is in a yielding mood, and that the amount of concession depends upon the amount of pressure.

#### THE LAWYER FLOURISHES AND THE FARMER DECAYS.

As to other matters we have no very clear intimation what the course of business will be. Two or three days ago a member of the Government who is credited with large influence in its councils, Mr. Chamberlain, in a letter to the electors of Wigan, with whom he had no particular concern, informed them that the object of electing a Liberal candidate was for the purpose of reviewing our land system. I suppose that such words addressed to the artisans of Wigan were intended to convey no small or tech-

nical information, but to hold out to them the prospect of a general scramble ; but the bait did not take, and a Conservative candidate was returned. But as for the question itself, of course the language is vague, and you may attach to it various meanings. There are several changes in the Land Laws which many people, and I among them, would witness without dissatisfaction—changes such as those indicated by the Commission which recently sat. There is no doubt there is dissatisfaction as to the security which tenant farmers possess for the improvements they make in their land, and this is a dissatisfaction which it is very proper to examine and to remove. But those are matters in the eyes of politicians of secondary importance, though probably in the eyes of those interested they will be a great deal more important than subjects which occupy a larger share of public attention. The only caution which I should wish to give with respect to legislation of that kind, which, however comprehensive in its general principles, must be carefully examined in its details, is that the danger which faces you is the increase of litigation. If you introduce a system which is generally accepted by all reasonable men concerned in it, whether landowners or occupiers, it is a good system and it will work harmoniously, and good will result to the community. But if you force on any particular arrangements to which either side objects the inevitable result must be an increase of litigation and the only consequence of your legislation will be, not that the landlord or tenant will benefit, but that the lawyer will become exceedingly rich. I have the greatest possible respect for the lawyers and I always desire that they should get rich, but I wish them to do so at anybody's expense but my own. With respect to the matter of litigation it would not be unwise to cast your eyes in the direction of Ireland, to which we have just referred in connection with this very matter. Apart from

the merits of the Land Act, which have already been condemned in this room, it had this undoubted feature, that it was deeply distasteful to one of the parties concerned in its operations. Has not that taken place in connection with it which I mentioned just now? The result of it has been a vast overwhelming increase of litigation, so that they now say that the vocation of lawyer is the only one which flourishes in Ireland.

#### THE LAND QUESTION.

There are one or two other lessons which we may draw from the state of Ireland with respect to this question of the land. We hear a great many people strongly denouncing what may be called the system of old family estates, and urging legislation which should establish estates of a far more commercial character, having for their sole object the manufacture of corn. But this very scheme was tried by a Liberal Government some 30 or 40 years ago in Ireland. A measure was passed, having precisely for its object to get rid of a considerable number of old family estates which, for many reasons, were then supposed to be unsuitable to the country, and to induce the purchase of land by investors who should look upon it in a purely commercial spirit. But what has been the result? These men at the invitation of Parliament came forward in large numbers, many of them being small men who invested the savings of a lifetime. They bought the land, knowing that they had come forward as commercial speculators, and they proceeded to let it at the market price, thinking they were doing no wrong. I cannot say that anybody can blame them for what they did, but of course the result was that many old customs were broken up, that a number of tenants suffered hardships, and that that state of general dissatisfaction and distress was brought about with which the

English Government now in vain attempts to cope. You cannot eat your cake and have it too. Old family estates have their disadvantages; commercial estates have theirs. You cannot, however, have both classes of estates. The same fountain cannot pour forth both sweet water and bitter. If you are asked to bring about a state of things which is to introduce a universal prevalence of the commercial type of estates, you must ask yourselves whether the plan that was followed in Ireland has brought either prosperity to the country or happiness to the class on whose behalf it was introduced. In the same way there are other points of view from which, in the tenants' interests, this proposal should be scrutinized. Mr. Chamberlain's language, especially when you compare it with the language of his supporters looks like an invitation to a sort of war against landowners. He seems to say, "Attack them; they are not strong. You will easily get what you want out of them, and no harm will be done." I venture to prophesy, however, that whatever may be the issue of this campaign which he is opening against the landowners, it will not be the landowners who will be the principal sufferers, for the landowner has many ways of escape.

#### UTOPIA.

But supposing that the ideal which is put before you of the proper form of agricultural holding, of the right kind of land system, be encouraged—supposing that it is realized, what will be the result? People represent the prospect as a kind of Utopia for the tenant-farmer. Well, it may be a Utopia for the tenant who will exist some 25 years hence, but is it a Utopia for the tenant-farmer who exists now? There is a most excellent gentleman in this county (Mr. Prout) who published a book showing what in his judgment could be done, if certain very violent



alterations were made in the land law, by the application of capital to the land. Now, I am not convinced by his calculations, although I readily render tribute to the labour and skill displayed in his work. The basis of his calculations is that the kind of tenant-farmer whom he contemplates is a man having £20 for every acre of land he possesses, and if you will scrutinize all these proposals for vast changes in our land system you will see that there is this idea at the bottom of them all—namely, that the mass of the present tenantry are somehow or other to be disposed of, and that in their place there is to exist a system of large capitalists, probably of large capitalist companies, who, no doubt, when in possession will draw from the land somewhat more than it now produces. But the first effect of the system must be hostile to the existing class of tenant-farmers. We are told that the first effort of every patriot in agricultural matters should be to increase the produce of the land. Now I frankly deny that, though I admit that increased production is an important thing. It is not, however, the most important. It is not so important as the maintenance in happiness and respectability of a large class of our fellow-subjects, and the undisturbed continuance of arrangements which have existed for a vast number of years. It is a benefit which you may very easily buy too dear, and I confess I am rather surprised to hear from the mouths from which they now issue these exhortations to increase the produce of the land, as if such increase were a matter of primary importance. There must be many here who remember the controversies on the subject of free trade. The defenders of protection argued that by the proposed system of free trade the produce of the land would be diminished, and the free-traders replied, “What means all this talk about increasing the produce of the land? Is not



Russia open to you, and America, and from those countries will there not always be plenty for the consumer to enjoy?" Now, however, the very people who said that seem to forget that all these vast markets are open to the consumer, and they argue that it is a matter of primary importance that the land should produce as much as possible. By restoring protection, I would remind them, they might perhaps do more towards stimulating production than in any other way. But these things are the excesses and extravagances of men who have given themselves up with too much enthusiasm to one idea. I believe that if the theories which are put forward by land reformers were adopted in their entirety, and hastily, the result would be the most cruel injury to a vast mass of the less fortunate members of the agricultural community. Dissension would be introduced among those who have hitherto been on the whole upon good terms. Men would find themselves at daggers drawn who have hitherto agreed well together; and if even the effect were a slight increase in the produce of the land, in the sum of human suffering which would be produced the benefit would be wholly effaced.

#### THE FARMER'S FRIEND.

I have said these words because I feel there is always danger when exhortations for particular legislative measures are addressed to a particular class who are told that in such or such modes they will find a remedy for all their suffering, and relief from all their difficulties. I feel that there is danger that they may accept without scrutiny the assurances which are made, and be seduced into giving their support to dangerous projects. Now, I hope that the tenant farmers of this part of the country will bear in mind the wisdom of the maxim, "Do not trust to advertisements." Advertisement, as you know, is systematically employed for

the purpose of making known the virtues of all agricultural implements; nevertheless those who are wise try the instruments before subscribing to the published records of their merits. I hope that something of the same wisdom will be applied by you in the case of legislative proposals. Do not accept as a proof of their merits all the assurances which their authors may be inclined to give. My belief is that the worst service that you can do to the agricultural community is to introduce antagonism between its various members, and that if you do so, those who will be chiefly injured will be the weakest, the least fortunate, the least powerful members of the body. Therefore, I believe that the Conservative party will before long be recognised, if they are not so already, by all farmers as really maintaining the true doctrine, by the acceptance of which the farming as well as the landowning interests should flourish. It is only by adhering to ancient rights, and maintaining, whatever their application to changed circumstances, the accepted principles of law, that you can uphold and continue the harmony that has hitherto existed in the agricultural community; and depend upon it, it is upon that basis alone, upon the basis of sustaining ancient and existing rights and principles, that you can continue upon an assured foundation the agricultural prosperity which has marked this country for centuries up to the present time.

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### *THE DANGER OF A PARNELLITE ALLIANCE.*

(AT READING, OCTOBER 30, 1883.)

I have to thank you on behalf of the House of Lords most heartily for the kind reception you have given to this toast, and I believe that your feeling with respect to that

institution, and the necessary part which it fulfills in the complicated machinery by which we are governed, is shared by the large majority of our countrymen. It is true that of late we have heard some discordant voices and some angry criticism, but I confess that when I read the remarks and the proposals of Mr. Bright in the North, with respect to the House of Lords, I was very much consoled by the reflection that, just half a century ago, O'Connell had made almost the same criticisms and the same proposals, and that nobody was a penny the worse. I dare say that half a century hence some person analogous to Mr. Bright will, on due occasion, repeat those criticisms. Mr. Bright has justly observed, with regard to any measure for sweeping away the House of Lords, unless we suppose the feeling of this country has risen to a revolutionary point—which is not a contingency that I apprehend—unless we suppose that any such measure must receive the assent of the House of Lords itself, and that again is a contingency which I find it difficult to contemplate; that, although it is possible that you may influence the House of Lords to pass other measures upon the threat of its own abolition, you cannot by any threat whatever, induce it to vote its own abolition. Fear of death will induce men to do other things, but it has never yet induced any man to commit suicide. I know that it is said that the House of Lords fails to fulfil its due part in our Constitution, because it is exclusively and invariably a Conservative body. Those who make that criticism commit the common error of spreading the experience of the actual moment over a long period of time. As a matter of fact it has not been so. I do not refer to the last century, but for a long time the Whigs were predominant in the House of Lords. But I do say that the leaning and bias of the House of Lords to the Conservative party, so far as it exists, date entirely from the accession to office of Mr. Gladstone. It was not the case

under Lord Aberdeen and Lord Palmerston. Undoubtedly the peculiar doctrines and policy associated with the administration of Mr. Gladstone have produced a very decided effect on the policy of the House of Lords, and I doubt whether, on calm reflection and in the long run, that this judgment of the House of Lords will be in discord with the judgment of the country. No doubt it is a misfortune that the House of Lords should be confronted with so large a majority as exists on the other side in the House of Commons. It induces a feeling of hostility on the part of the Government, because they feel that the House of Lords is the only obstacle to the full carrying out of their desires, and they express that hostility in the ingenious but hardly equitable method of deferring as much as they can the submission of all legislation to the House of Lords until both Houses have been sufficiently thinned by the operation of the heats of August upon the temperature of London. But these are mere transitory difficulties. I believe that the dominant position of one party in the House of Commons is a far more transitory phenomenon. No one will maintain, or has maintained, more strongly than I do that it is the duty of the House of Commons to watch, and to adapt itself to the permanent and deliberate judgment of the people of this country; yet our history warns us that you must not always take the decision of the House of Commons as being an absolute and final declaration of the will of the people.

#### VACILLATION AND IMPOTENCE.

May I take this opportunity of expressing my satisfaction at the evidences of vigour and activity and of probable success which are presented by the association which I now have the honour to address. It is not ungermane to the toast to which I am replying, because it is on the support of the public opinion which springs from associations such as this

that the House of Lords must ultimately rely ; and certainly there never was a position of public affairs in which the activity of all who love the institutions of this country was more loudly claimed. We know that the present Government entered office as the Government of peace and of repose. They were to counteract what was called the adventurous policy of Lord Beaconsfield. I think I remember Mr. Gladstone charged us with all the disturbances that existed when we were in office—the opening up of the Eastern question, and the upheavals that took place in Eastern countries—and that these occurrences had been produced out of our government, as if out of a virgin soil, and Mr. Bright told us that the result of the entry of the present Government would be this—there would be a great calm. Well, what do you think of this calm ? Now, if we are to adopt the rule that all the troubles which arise during the tenure of a Government spring out of a virgin soil owing to the fault of the Government, what shall be said of the virgin soil out of which the troubles of Mr. Gladstone's Government have arisen ? It seems that the arduous, the delicate, and the critical questions which affect this country and the British Empire have continued to follow Mr. Gladstone's Government. Look at Ireland ; we are no longer within measurable distance of civil war in that country. Peace is only maintained by the military aid rendered to the civil power. Look at India ! It seems as if the Government were so enamoured of the pattern they set up in Ireland that they must introduce it there, and it seems as if the one desire they have is to multiply the difficulties of those who are of English extraction and who are bound to the English nation ; that they should be discouraged and disheartened, and those who are opposed to them filled with wild and unlawful hopes. They are so fond of the splendid results which their interference has produced



between landlord and tenant in Ireland that they are extending it to the Highlands of Scotland and show strong inclinations to extend it further still. If we look to the colonies, what is the state of things which we see there? I do not propose—I do not care—to follow the fate of the unhappy potentate, Cetewayo. I do not know in what precise vicissitude of his unhappy career he is in at the present moment; but it seems as if Her Majesty's Government let him out of prison when they saw prospects of peace, and then they let him go when he had destroyed it. So far as I can understand he was sent out to that country for no other reason than because it gave the opportunity of reversing the policy of the late Government, and also of showing the great contempt of those now in power for any promises or pledges given by those who preceded them. We have affronted those who have supported us. We brought Cetewayo back here—I believe in order that by the sight of all that this country has to show he might be deeply impressed with British majesty and power. I should like to enter into his mind now, and see what his conception of British majesty and power is at this moment. We hear to-day that his neighbours, the Transvaal Government, are also in process of having explained to them the reality of British majesty and power. A deputation has come over here to receive the abandonment of the Convention—that Convention which you will remember was adopted in fulfilment of a pledge given by the Government that they would restore the Queen's authority in the Transvaal. That Convention is the solitary obstacle that prevents the 40,000 white people in the Transvaal from trampling on the rights and property of the half million blacks who inhabit that country and the numberless tribes on the frontier, and you know that that Convention will be abandoned as readily as the former claims of England were. But what we have to ask is, what the effect of this



vacillation and the impotence of this colonial policy is likely to be on the spirit of the colonists who form so large a part of the power of the British Empire? They are being told, not by words, but by acts more eloquent than words, that England is powerless to protect her dependencies at the extremities of her empire, and how long do you imagine that their affection will survive when that discovery has been fully made.

A REFORM AGITATION.

At home we are apparently upon the eve of another reform agitation. Whether the precise measures are desirable or not it is difficult to say until we see them; but this at all events is evident, that it is a change not adopted in pursuance of any great demand on the part of those who are to be admitted to the franchise. It is a change which will be forced on the country in pursuance of the rash pledges which politicians have given. It is not a change which is demanded by the circumstances of the case or by the wish of those on whose behalf that change is to be effected. But that is not the circumstance about it which alarms me most. What I most fear is the result of a measure which is not produced by a Cabinet which, as a whole, believes in its reality or sufficiency. We have been told by one member, and that not the least powerful, Mr. Chamberlain, that he believes in nothing short of manhood suffrage and the payment of members, and we know that any other alteration of the franchise will be in his eyes merely a transitory arrangement—that any moderate sentiments which may be expressed by the Government will be, as far as the whole Government are concerned, an insincere declaration at least in the eyes of one of them. Therefore, we cannot take anything they may offer as representing, on the part of the party that offers it, any sincere settlement of a complicated and delicate and

difficult question. Now all these circumstances are matters which should greatly tend to stimulate the activity and the energy of an Association such as this, because, although there may seem to be a wide distance between these great questions and the petty details of the work in which you are constantly engaged, yet nothing can be more certain than that on the manner in which you perform that work will depend the manner in which these great questions are determined. If you wish Ireland to be governed with a firm and just hand, which shall allow no hope of severance from the power of this Empire, if you wish our honour and our interests to be maintained in distant lands such as Egypt, if you desire that a sensible as opposed to a sentimental policy shall be pursued in India, if you think it of high importance that our colonies should be jealous of our Empire and be joined to us by ties of constant sympathy and constant co-operation and assistance, if you wish that changes in our ancient Constitution should not be made in obedience to the demands of mere party strategy, but should be the result of calm and deliberate consideration on the part of the people as a whole, your mode of giving effect to the desire would be to work with heart and will to perfect the machinery by which the Conservative party shall be enabled to strengthen its forces and secure the support of the majority of our countrymen.

Addressing a public meeting in the evening he said : It is a great gratification and honour for me to be invited to address an assembly of this kind, and I feel that in communing together to-night upon the political subject of the day we are carrying on the work of the British Constitution and of the British Government as it is more and more shaping itself in these days. A long time ago all was done at Westminster. Now all is done, or much more is done, in assemblies of electors such as these. It is from you now that the direct impulses of political power proceed ; it is to you we must now

address our arguments to induce you to look to matters, as we think, in a sound spirit, and to invite you to work together with us for the happiness of the people and of the country which we love so well.

DIFFICULTIES ALL ROUND.

I know that a political meeting, as popularly regarded, is a means by which a certain number of men either retain or obtain office. That is the popular assumption, and I ought to play my part to-night in that spirit, and deal with the questions as if the one object was to substitute one set of administrators for another; but I confess that in the present threatening aspect of public affairs it would be difficult to maintain that spirit. I feel it difficult to desire to occupy the posts of those who are now responsible for the Government of this country. On whatever side you look, whether you consider foreign or domestic affairs, the future appears to be full of difficulty. Difficulties menace us on every side. Questions of the greatest difficulty are coming up for settlement. Trials are impending which will test the metal and quality of Englishmen to the utmost. I remember that when the late Government was in power Lord Hartington was rather fond of making it a reproach to us that we did not keep up a friendly alliance with the French Republic. I fully admit the importance of keeping up friendship with the French Republic. I think we did so. We were conscious of other duties; we recognized the enormous duty of friendly relations with Austria and Germany in maintaining the peace of Europe, and undoubtedly we set a great price on the goodwill which existed between this country and those Powers. But we were at least able to maintain, as it seemed to me, very amicable relations with our friends across the water; but I doubt if Lord Hartington has been very much more successful in solving the problem which he wanted us to settle. I see to-day that the awkward question of Madagascar is in

some sense adjusted; but we are carefully informed that the French Government has apologized in a stiff and uncourteous spirit, and it appears that our Government has replied in a similar tone. Well, of course that is a satisfactory way of maintaining an alliance. I wish that that was the only subject of difficulty which Lord Hartington and his colleagues have had to deal with in connection with that country. They have been unable to renew the treaty of commerce, which as they know is of such vast importance to the North of England, and which terminated in their time. They have been unable to contrive to obtain any decent or tolerable terms for the extension of the Suez Canal, which is of such vast importance to this country. From Tonquin to Madagascar, from the Congo to Newfoundland, we hear of difficulties that arise with our impulsive neighbours. I am well aware that the course of alliances involves the concurrence of two parties, and you cannot justly, if they fail, lay all the blame on one. I have alluded to it for two reasons—first, in order to indicate to you the hollowness of that species of criticism by which the late Government was destroyed. If there is anything true in the proverb that time brings its revenge it has been fulfilled in the ironical and unkind fate which has involved the present Government in all the difficulties for which they were so forward to condemn their predecessors.

EGYPT.

But there is another reason for which I have referred to this Madagascar question. You have, no doubt, read an account of the terrible extremities to which at that time it appeared that our representatives on those coasts were driven. Captain Johnson was a brave and gallant British officer. We are told that at one time he felt the insults to our flag so keenly that he had actually

cleared his decks for action, although the certain result of such action in the presence of the vast superiority of the French forces must have been the destruction of his vessel and all that it contained. Now, do not understand me to blame the French Government for this. I know they were not accomplices in the outrageous course followed by Admiral Pierre. Admiral Pierre has himself passed beyond the reach of human criticism, but the terrible danger into which it brought the relations of the two countries is also fraught with an instructive lesson. The French Government may be, and I believe is, anxious to live on terms of peace and good will with the Government of England; but the French Government, owing to the plans of its institutions and the perpetual changes of administration which take place, is singularly weak in controlling the distant agents of its power. Men of the stamp and temper of Admiral Pierre are to be found in all parts of the world. This consideration I hope will weigh with her Majesty's Government when they come to decide one of the most momentous of the questions that now await their determination. As you know, the question before them is—Shall they retire from Egypt or not? I fear that the impression has been created, has gained ground with some minds, that it is possible for us by indirect means, even if we withdraw our forces from the country, by the action of that sublimated ethereal essence called moral influence, to maintain our power in Egypt. I fear if her Majesty's Government adopt any such ideas for their guide they would commit an error fatal for themselves and disastrous for England. Whatever the friendly sentiments of the French Government may be, you may depend upon it the subordinate agents of French power, if once material force is entirely withdrawn from Egypt, would spare no pains and shrink from no means for the purpose of ousting English influence and English power, and this would be done, and



done effectually, though the Government of Paris were entirely innocent of any complicity with such a design. I feel assured that, apart from all party politics, and without any relation to the division that separates Liberal from Tory, if the issue of the policy of the Government should be that, after all the efforts that have been made, after all the blood that has been shed, and the treasure that has been poured out, another Power should gain an influence in Egypt superior to, and dominating our own, the Government would meet with the almost unanimous condemnation of all parties and all sections. No issue more important for the external power of this country, for the maintenance of that empire of which we are all proud, for the sustenance of our dominion in India, which so largely depends upon the power of free and rapid communication with this country, no issue more important than this has in our time been presented to any Cabinet for decision. This Egyptian question will test the power of the Cabinet, and on its issue the judgment of the people will be largely formed.

#### IRELAND.

But there is another matter which will greatly affect the opinions of the people of this country as to the manner in which they are governed. We have Mr. Gladstone's own testimony that up to 1880 Ireland was in a healthy and prosperous condition. We know in what condition it stands now. I am not speaking merely of its social condition, or of the relations of landlord and tenant, which have been so often discussed, and upon which I do not now desire to detain you. I am speaking of the Imperial aspect of the Irish question, on the aspect of it as involving the connection of England with a country whose dependence on England is vital to our strategic security, and on our duties towards a large population of men, Protestant by religion



and of British blood and extraction, to whom our acts in the past have made us bound by pledges of honour, which, unless we are the meanest of nations, we never can forget. One of the most remarkable events of the present year has been the splendid reception which my friend Sir Stafford Northcote received in various towns in the north of Ireland. Much, no doubt, of that enthusiasm was due to his personal qualities and his services to the Conservative party ; but much of it was also an expression on the part of the Irish of the northern provinces of their unalterable determination that their fate should continue to be linked with that of England. This demonstration of theirs has thrown a new light—at least a light that to many will be new—upon the Irish question and the question of Home Rule. What does it mean ? It means giving over the northern province of Ireland to be governed by the other three provinces. It means that those who are kinsmen in blood or co-religionists in faith shall be abandoned to men who have many high qualities indeed, but among whom disaffection to this day has made terrible and fearful progress. If you give them Home Rule, retaining, of course, a nominal connection with this country, an external alliance ; and if these men defend themselves—these inhabitants of the north of Ireland—and if they are oppressed, if any outrageous measures of confiscation are pressed against them after you have granted Home Rule, the legal right will be in the followers of Mr. Parnell as against them, and you will be called upon to support Mr. Parnell against your own blood and kindred. Is it possible that the people of this country should ever consent to an arrangement such as this ? I am sure it never could be done if the issue is presented to them plainly and openly ; and if ever it is done, it will be a fatal result to the so-called Kilmainham Treaty. It is not a treaty, it is the manœuvres and the bargains of politicians.

## A FORECAST.

Sir J. Mowbray has mentioned that deed without a name which has been merely an understanding; it was a mutual coincidence of opinion. I am told that such a strange coincidence of opinion threatens to happen again, and that there will be an irresistible desire on the part of Mr. Parnell to vote for the Government in all critical divisions, and, on the other side, by a strange coincidence, there will be an irresistible desire on the part of the Government to yield a portion of Home Rule to Mr. Parnell. But this portion of Home Rule, if rumour is correct, will be ingeniously veiled. It will be called a system of county government. You will observe that if the power of taxation and of local government is conceded to those who are hostile to the connection with England, it requires no great foresight to predict that the time must come when the pressure of their action, as against those with whom they differ in their own country, and as against the Government of England, will make the relations between the two countries almost intolerable, and, at all events, will give enormous advantage to the clamour for Home Rule. It is absolutely necessary that the people of this country should be alive to the danger that attaches to such apparently innocent propositions, and should insist that sufficient securities are taken that no damage or injury shall be done to the fundamental principle of the Imperial connection between Great Britain and Ireland. And I look upon the matter with some apprehension, because I do not know who it is that is governing us in this matter. I know that Lord Hartington has said that it would be madness—madness, mind—to give an extension of local government to Ireland until Ireland has given pledges that she would not use it to weaken the connection between her and this country. It is needless to say that no such pledges are likely to be

given; but though Lord Hartington has said this, Mr. Chamberlain has said that no peace could be looked for in Ireland until this local government is given, and starting with these two public declarations of policy, Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain are to meet next month in the Cabinet to settle the policy of Ireland. Now, I earnestly hope that Lord Hartington may influence his colleague, but, judging from past experience, I should say that whoever he may induce to follow his opinion, there is one person he never prevails upon to adopt it, and that is himself.

THE DANGER OF DELAY.

And do not imagine that this is a mere matter of a fight in the Cabinet upon an issue, and that no harm is done. Looking back for a moment to the Egyptian question, to which I drew your attention just now, you may remember that there was a system set up by Lord Beaconsfield's Government which, whatever might be said of it, assured peace, harmony, and agreement between England and France and the improvement of the condition of the unfortunate Egyptian peasant; and when at length the present Government succeeded to office they took up the Egyptian question. A military mutiny had broken out, and a military officer of considerable power was at the head of it, and this power and influence grew with the success of the mutiny, and in 1882 the British Government issued the most formal and definite threats that if the existing state of things was imperilled they would interfere with force of arms. For six or seven months, however, they did not interfere. Lord Granville, an experienced and shrewd Minister, must have known the result of what was going on in Egypt. If he was unaware of what was going on, there were plenty of men at the Foreign Office to warn him of the acts of the rebels and what was going on, and at that time we now

know there was a permanent division in the Cabinet. Now I do not say this to blame Mr. Bright. The doctrines which he conscientiously holds on the subject are well known. I do not wish to say anything in derogation of his motives, but he holds the strongest opinions against the lawfulness of warlike operations. He was sitting in the Cabinet from January to July, and at the time the Cabinet was divided by his opposition. The division came to an end. The matter had to be settled. The forts of Alexandria were bombarded, and Mr. Bright was projected out of the Cabinet. But do not imagine that the difference of opinion was a matter of no account. During all the time Mr. Bright was making up his mind, when it was impossible for him, owing to his conscientious convictions, to agree to the policy of his colleagues, the evil was growing, and the prestige of England was falling. People were learning to treat her threats as of no account, and before she could make up her mind to interfere the condition of things, and all the guarantees for the progress of Egypt and the improvement of its peasantry, were inevitably crumbling into dust. I remind you of this history because we are in danger that the same thing may take place with respect to Ireland. We know there is a profound schism in the Cabinet on the subject. We know that Lord Hartington and his party think one thing and Mr. Chamberlain and his party another, and we know from this Egyptian precedent that the inevitable result of this difference is that the policy of the Government will be paralyzed, and that some feeble compound of both policies will be offered to the country—something that will at once discourage loyal adherents of England and will give further hope to those who desire to separate the two countries, but which will not take a single step towards securing that abstinence from political agitation, that addition to honest and

strenuous industry, which is the only hope for the future of unhappy Ireland.

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

With respect to our home affairs, we have heard from a certain confession at Leeds that another Reform Bill is impending. This is another matter which will require the serious attention of the people of this country. In old times until about sixty years ago nobody thought of altering the Constitution of their country. I do not deny that there were good causes for alterations at that time, but we had no machinery for bringing the people of the country into consultation as to the mode in which these changes should take place. Now, if there is any thing which concerns the people at large more than another it is obviously the process and mechanism by which they are governed. In America there is an established machinery by which everybody who desires to alter the Constitution of the country can bring his plans before the country. In France there is a special machinery for revising the Constitution, but in England no such thing exists, and therefore it becomes us to walk very warily when projects of this kind are made, because the danger we have to face is this—the danger is that the party which is in power and has a majority in Parliament may use that majority for so altering the Constitution as to make its own majority perpetual. In consequence of the absence of any special machinery for revising the Constitution—for apparently our ancestors did not deem it necessary—there is nothing to prevent a party which has a large majority in Parliament from using that majority for the purpose of making such arrangements as shall in great measure make their own domination permanent. We have had Reform Bills—we have had two of them, and I have no doubt we shall have more. Probably we have a Reform Bill impending now, but before that



is passed—the idea of the settlement of any question is an idea that no one will admit in the political vocabulary—I hope we shall arrive at some agreement as to the conditions under which such changes are to be made. On the Reform Bill that took place in 1832 there was a dissolution after the Bill had been produced, which gave the nation a distinct power of determining whether it liked the Bill or not. It did like the Bill, and accordingly the Bill was passed. Again, in 1867, a Reform Bill was introduced, but it was introduced by a Government in a minority, and therefore there was no danger of its being used for such purposes as I have suggested. But you are now presented with a new condition of affairs. You have a Government with an enormous majority in the House of Commons. When there are proposals to change to a very great extent the constitution of Parliament and the mode in which this country is governed, I confess I think it would be far more in accordance with the spirit of our institutions if, before they took so vital a step, they allowed the people of this country to know what their proposals were and to decide upon whether they would accept them or not.

#### REDISTRIBUTION FIRST.

With respect to the mere increase of suffrage, as far as I can judge, though I know the extreme hazard of making political predictions, I do not think that the results would be very great ; but there are more difficulties in that change than perhaps at first sight appear. However, I do not for a moment entertain the idea that the Government will present to us a scheme for the alteration of the suffrage without telling us what their intentions as to the redistribution of seats may be, and I will tell you why I think that is improbable. In 1866 a similar proposition was made, and a motion condemning it was introduced in the House of Commons. That motion was seconded by Lord Stanley, who is now the Earl



of Derby, the Chief Secretary for the Colonies, and he showed in the most convincing manner the utter impossibility of separating the question of the suffrage from the question of redistribution. I believe his speech, which was then spoken of as unanswerable, would be a perfect mine of argument against any proposal for such a separation, and I do not believe that any Government can commit itself to such a policy. It is such a proposal as though you were to vote the proposals of an architect for making some great change in your town without first seeing the plans on which the architect proposed to go. As to the point of redistribution, it is a matter, I think, that ought not to be decided without allowing the people of this country to have their voice in it, because on the arrangement of the redistribution the possession of political power in the future will very largely depend. In America they have a plan of giving to every political idea some forcible name which remains fixed in the memory, and there is a process there called "jerrymandering." It was derived from a Jeremiah Mander, who was a great politician in his day, and by the process they so arranged constituencies that a small one might become a large one. Suppose that this borough of Reading was divided into ten wards, and that there was altogether a very small majority of Liberals over Conservatives, it would be perfectly possible, by judiciously arranging your wards, so to spread out your majority that the ten representatives of these wards might be entirely on one side. If you wish to diminish a hostile minority, spread your majority over as large a number of constituencies as you can. If you wish to prevent a hostile majority doing so, concentrate that hostile majority into as few constituencies as you can. That is a secret well known to those who have the organization of political arrangements, but the existence of that power makes it a matter of absolutely supreme importance that the Government should not go

behind the back of the people in making any arrangements of this kind, but that they should lay upon the table of Parliament any proposal that they make, and that the final enactment should not take place until the people had been consulted by a dissolution. That, I believe, would be in any case a wise and constitutional policy, but I need hardly point out the extreme importance of this question as it affects Ireland. You cannot separate Ireland from England. You cannot largely interfere with the suffrage in Ireland without very materially affecting the balance of the forces with which you have to contend in maintaining the integrity of the Empire. I am told that sufficient notice was given of this matter by the speeches that were made before the last election. Well, the most important speeches that were then made were, as we all know, made in Mid Lothian. I have read the Mid Lothian speeches, and the only suggestion I can find to enlighten us on this matter is a suggestion, made no doubt in the interests of Scottish constituencies, that distance from the metropolis justified a greater number of members than population would furnish a reason for. That was made to answer the objection that the numerical test would give to London a great preponderance and might leave Scotland rather in the cold. But if that is the only guide that we have as to the future Redistribution Bill it makes me the more anxious that it should be submitted to the people of this country before it is adopted by Parliament, because what that means is that the counties of Caithness or Sutherland—or, rather, say Kerry and Mayo, being the furthest from the centre of affairs—would have the largest number of members. If that principle is impartially applied conceive the condition of the House of Commons if there was a large excess of Irish members over the number that now adorns that assembly.

CONSTANTLY MENDING THE ENGINE.

You have probably read much of the different claims of the various parties upon your support. In the eyes of many advocates of the Liberal party it seems to them sufficient to detail the victories, or so-called victories, of that party in the past. Such history is of a legendary character. I see that Mr. Bright occasionally and, I think, other great authorities attribute the carrying of free-trade to their political party. Mr. Bright has every reason to be proud of the carrying of that policy, but he has no right to lend a portion of the credit to the Liberal party. The first free-trader, so far as I remember, was Mr. Pitt, and Lord Liverpool and Mr. Huskisson were free-traders when nobody else was. Lord Melbourne, the head of the Liberal party fifty years ago, declared that anybody was mad who gave up protection. Yet it was given up afterwards by Sir Robert Peel, who was then a Conservative. I note, therefore, that the history which would ascribe free trade to the Liberal party is, perhaps, a little tainted with inaccuracy. I demur altogether to the principle of this judgment. Would any of you go to an apothecary's shop because the previous tenant was a very good man at curing rheumatism? You would say, "It matters little to me whether the former tenant was a skilful man or not; all that concerns me is the skill of the present tenant of the establishment." It is only the existing party, whether Liberal or Conservative, that really concerns you. Success, wisdom, and justice do not stick to organizations or buildings: they are the attributes of men. It is by their present acts and their present principles that the two parties must be judged. But I will tell you on what main particulars, at all events as regards domestic policy, the Liberal party are in error. In the first place, instead of considering measures which are actually required for the

benefit of the people, they always turn aside to take down or alter some institution, and they give up to what they call reform the time and energy that should be devoted to improving the condition of all classes of the country. No doubt, in its way, properly accepted, reform is a very good thing. It is a very good thing to have the best locomotive and the best carriages on the railway, but if you perpetually keep the engine in the shed, and never run any trains because you are constantly mending the engine, no one will say you are fulfilling the duties which attach to a railway company. If you tell the Radicals there is any abuse, instead of trying to mend the abuse, they begin to mend the body by whom the abuse is to be amended, instead of going straight to the matter; they persist in perpetually taking the machine to pieces. The result is the legislation of Parliament is smitten with a sterility, and we are constantly engaged, not in arguing what ought to be done, but who is the kind of person that ought to do it.

#### SETTING CLASS AGAINST CLASS.

But a much more serious evil appears to me to attach to Liberal propositions. At the present time we have great difficulties to contend with, we have great evils to remove, we require for the purpose the united efforts of all men of goodwill and of all classes in this country. It is a mistake to say anything merely to produce dissension and bitterness between those who ought to co-operate for the country's good. Take the case of Ireland; twelve years ago the Liberal Government might have had the opportunity if they had chosen of solving the Irish question without setting class against class, by instituting a system of peasant proprietorship, slowly and zealously, but effectively, wedding the people to the land. But instead of that they have gone into the thorny path of

creating dissension between landlord and tenant, and putting class against class, and of which this generation may not see the end. Take another question in which I feel a great interest—the housing of the poor in our large towns. I hope that much good may be done in that direction, and that it may be the privilege of the present generation to assuage a vast amount of human misery. But I see symptoms in many quarters of an inclination to turn men aside from the practical question how to relieve those evils in order to get up a fight between the landowning class and the rest of the country—a question on which I do not desire now to express any opinion, but which will certainly place powerful classes at issue and interfere with the object which we have in view, and may defer for generations the remedy which we seek. There is a peculiar error to my mind which the Radical politician constantly commits in his efforts to ameliorate the condition of the people of this country. He appears to approach every question in order to find out exciting material for hounding on one class against another. I do not believe that this is progress. We have enormous difficulties to encounter; we have a great population; the sources of prosperity are not flowing so abundantly as in the past, and we find that the opportunities of industry are not numerous, and, therefore, the means of keeping the people from great suffering are engaging the minds and thoughts of political men at the present time. It is a great, arduous, and almost superhuman task, and it is a task to which we can only prove equal if we pull together and act together in trying to fulfil it. They are no true friends of progress who persuade you that these objects are to be reached by generating quarrels. If we wish to remove the blots from our Constitution we must do all we can to act together, and it must be your task, yours the constituencies, to discourage the policy which assists in the manufacture of grievances and increases the



animosities which exist among the various sections of the community. It is a great mission which the present generation has to perform to make the conditions of life more tolerable to all who exist in these narrow islands. It is only by hearty co-operation, it is only by maintaining harmony and good-will among all classes of the community, that we can make England, not only greatly respected abroad, but happy, prosperous, and contented at home.

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### *LIBERAL AND CONSERVATIVE POLICIES.*

(AT THE CITY CARLTON CLUB, NOVEMBER 22, 1883).

My Lord Mayor, this has been in many respects a very satisfactory evening—very satisfactory in that it has drawn together members of the principal Conservative clubs of the greatest city of the world, a city on whose shoulders of old lay the burden of defending the liberties of England, a city which now, in its closer inclination to the Conservative party, is still fulfilling the functions which the ancestors of the present citizens performed. We have heard since we entered this room that a considerable electoral victory, as bye elections go, has been won by the Conservative party, and is has been very naturally a subject for congratulation in the speeches that have been addressed to us to-night. I heard it with very great pleasure, not only because it was the addition of another vote on the right side, not only because it was the addition of a very able and excellent member to the House of Commons, but also because it indicated what I hope will be the path of safety through dangers of considerable magnitude.



ONE OF THE GREATEST DANGERS IN THIS COUNTRY.

You have heard, I have no doubt, that just before this election the Liberal candidate was interviewed by the representatives of the Irish electors; certain tests were proposed to him, and at the end of the interview the Irish electors pronounced themselves satisfied, and the Irish vote was accordingly given for the Liberal candidate. Now, that process, which at a general election will go on in many a constituency in this country, is one of the greatest dangers of this country. If the offer of the solid Irish vote can purchase the adhesion of a sufficient number of Liberal candidates, it is difficult to foresee how far the danger and perplexities of this country may be carried. But the remedy is near at hand. Although many Liberals are partisans enough to be willing to sell anything, even the integrity of their country, in order to gain an election, that is not the case with the whole party. I believe that in the present instance a sufficient number were found who disdained any such bargain and any such alliance, and I believe that if such propositions are made in the future you will find that many moderate Liberals will prefer the integrity of their country and their duty to their Queen to any passing victory which a questionable alliance may procure for them. And I cannot help noticing the fact that the member who has been brought in for York was himself, I believe, a Liberal, and was certainly the son of a former Liberal member for that city. He therefore indicates the direction in which the current is flowing. The word "Liberal" under the guidance of those who now control the party has entirely lost and changed its meaning, and the more moderate and the more estimable of its followers are beginning to discover the fact. I cannot pass on without noticing another melancholy piece of news which reached all of us before the commencement of our

dinner to-night. This event in Egypt must have caused great sadness in every heart, for there could be no doubt that many English officers had been struck down in the performance of a difficult military duty; and our sympathy for their relatives and our admiration for the conduct which had led them to this fate could not but be deep. In the presence of this recent news, I should be sorry to go far into the political considerations it suggests, but I cannot avoid connecting it with those suggestions which have been made that the time has come for our evacuating Egypt, that the time has come for trusting British interests in Egypt to the support of a native force. I think, at all events, that all those ideas will have disappeared to-morrow morning like an unwholesome dream.

THE GOVERNMENT OF LONDON.

It is impossible that the speakers this evening should have avoided referring to the peculiar position in which the City stands with regard to the political business which it is supposed will engage the attention of Parliament. We do not know whether the City is to be brought under the harrow or not. The Government prudently refuses to speak. I think the probabilities are that, in the entire absence of any desire for a Reform Bill, and the entire absence of any considerable desire for a change in the arrangements of the metropolis, it will be thought that meddling with the metropolis is, on the whole, the least dangerous process of the two. Well, if that is the case, I can only heartily congratulate the City that the crisis has come upon them at a time when their fortunes are entrusted to so distinguished and so courageous a champion as my right hon. friend the Lord Mayor. He has already let the world know in no indistinct terms what his opinion is, and I think by that declaration of opinion he will probably have decided many doubting minds. At all events, it is a

matter on which you may be sure Parliament will be very accessible to the opinions of those who are principally concerned. It is not a matter on which any great political feeling can be aroused ; and I trust that the City generally may be animated by the determination which animates their chief magistrate. As for arguments, it would be premature to enter much into the question, as my right hon. friend has in a few words really exhausted what has to be said upon the subject. It is absurd to think of it as if it were a question of self-government. Nobody grudges the various communities which exist in the metropolis the most complete forms of self-government which they can desire. The question is not between self-government and no self-government, but whether you are to have a vast heterogeneous, ill-compacted area, or whether each community is to have the privilege of governing itself. We are told that nothing can be done until the present anarchy of London is relieved ; but if it is anarchy that Finsbury should not be governed by the same municipality as that which governs the City of London, I do not see where the matter is to stop. The metropolis is an enormous aggregation of human beings, and no municipality in the country can be cited as a guide for its future organization. It differs from other municipalities in every respect ; even from the largest towns in the country. It has not grown up as they have from a common centre by a common law of growth. Greenwich and London were not originally united, as some people seemed to imagine ; they have grown up separately, and have been included for certain purposes in a common area, but there is no community of citizenship or of social life between them, and there is scarcely any community of interest between those who inhabit the extreme West and the extreme East of this vast metropolis. What will be the effect of putting them all under one municipality ? There seems to be an idea that you make muni-

cipal power in proportion as you make a large municipality. The truth is the other way. If you do make it large, you in proportion diminish its power of doing business. What hinders everybody in doing its work is the abundance of the eloquence which is displayed; it is that which blocks the Courts of Law, it is that which blocks the House of Commons, and I wish I could say it was that which blocks the House of Lords. And there is no doubt that, assuming the most entire patriotism, and the most complete abnegation of self, and the most absolute determination to do its duty on the part of this immense municipality, if the members of it are numerous their debates must in proportion be lengthy and the amount of business transacted must be small. When you rely, as you must rely in the main, on unpaid labour, it is a great mistake to tax it with too vast an area of duty. Men who have other occupations can only devote a certain portion of their leisure to the performance of these public duties. Give them a small amount to do, and they will do it well. Give them an excessive amount to do, and they will delegate it to their professional advisers. And far be it from me to say a word against professional advisers. I know their ability and their integrity, but I have observed that they are animated by the enthusiasm of their profession, and that their government is not the most economical which it is possible for human wisdom to devise. Professional advisers when they advise are admirable advisers, but when they govern they are apt to forget that the constable must not be outrun. The real point, however, is to avoid being misled, as we so often are in the present day, by the mere glamour of imagination. There is a kind of luxury in upsetting a corporation which has lasted for 800 years. There is a luxury in setting up the biggest corporation over the biggest city that has ever been known. But we must guard against these intellectual delusions, and I believe that

London will be better and more efficiently governed if moderate areas of government are selected than if these dreams of great legislative changes are realized.

SUEZ CANAL.

There is another matter which also interests the City of London very much just at this moment on which I must say a word—it is eminently opportune at the present moment, because M. de Lesseps is in this country now—I mean the question of the Suez Canal. And in referring to it I desire to speak, as we all must wish to speak, with the greatest veneration for one whose peaceful victories have placed him in the rank of the greatest men of the age. The gratitude of mankind, and especially of commercial mankind, to M. de Lesseps ought to be unbounded; but while we desire to entertain these feelings and desire to express them, let us remember this is a question of business. Mr. Goschen recently, addressing himself to this subject, said he utterly declined to inquire into legal technicality or into the precise claims of M. de Lesseps. These are his words:—“He would not disregard the claims of M. de Lesseps, because other countries might think worse of us than they do if we did disregard them.” This is not business; but this is the policy of Mr. Goschen. There is nothing that stands in the way of an arrangement such as the citizens of London would desire, except the legal claims of M. de Lesseps, and the technicalities which Mr. Goschen despises; and remember that these are not things to be complimented away. We are the trustees for the commerce, for the prosperity, for the industry of our fellow citizens which depend enormously on the mode in which this difficulty is solved; and we have no right to compliment it away and to give it away as a civility. We have no right to disregard those considerations and those legal technicalities, for they are the only things which stand



in the way of the establishment of a canal under British guidance, which is that which would really suit the commerce of this country. I said that they were the only things; but matters, I must admit, have been seriously changed by the unfortunate pledge which Mr. Gladstone allowed himself to give—the unfortunate opinion which he expressed in the House of Commons in favour of the claims of M. de Lesseps before they had been submitted to any general discussion or to any impartial legal investigation. The result is that the feelings of a great people are brought into question, and a settlement may be more difficult than it would have been if that utterance of Mr. Gladstone never had been made. It probably was to the commerce of this day the most costly speech that ever a Minister uttered. I will only say this, that if, in consequence of the impression which that speech has made, a settlement really satisfactory to the commerce of this country cannot now be arrived at, let it rather be delayed than that our signature should be given for a long period of years to a settlement which is not satisfactory. Remember that the supposed claims of M. de Lesseps are not merely to a financial monopoly, but to what I may call a political monopoly as well. If it were merely a financial monopoly—I do not say that his claims are justified even so far as that—but if it were a financial monopoly, something which any sovereign may very fairly concede to any undertaking, still that would be a matter that could be arranged by giving compensation. I would be the last to recommend that a man who deserved so highly of the European community should not get a rich and an ample reward for all his trouble. If it has gone far beyond a financial monopoly, he has a serious claim that the government of the canal should be in French hands, and that the administration of it should remain in Paris. I agree with Sir George Elliot, that if that state of things is permanently to continue, it



will produce an amount of friction and ill-feeling between the commerce of the two countries that will risk more than the canal is worth. But that political monopoly is not a thing which it is competent for the Government of Egypt, or the Government of Turkey, to give away without the diplomatic assent of other Powers. It is a matter entirely within the diplomatic field. As for the claim that Frenchmen should control the channel through which English commerce is carried, whether it be this channel or whether it be another, that is a claim which cannot be defended under the ordinary law that applies to decisions of Sovereigns as regards their own country. It is a claim which can only be defended on diplomatic grounds, and without the consent of the Powers concerned it is a claim of no value whatever.

#### THE DEFENCE OF PROPERTY.

When the last election was declared, Mr. Gladstone consoled himself for the crushing defeat within this city by saying that the City of London was a place of accumulated wealth, which he seemed to think was the severest reproach he could address to you. Well, I believe this is a characteristic of the City; it is a characteristic which brings with it great power and imposes upon it great duties; for no one can be so blind to the signs of the times as not to see that, chiefly owing to the conduct of the present Government, the question of property, in its largest sense, is not in the position in which it was some years ago. I do not for a moment admit that the Conservative party has no other duties than the defence of property. It has many other most important duties, but, undoubtedly, as the institution by which industry is able to work, by which numbers are able to live, by which the power of the empire is sustained, property is the special object and care of the Conservative party, and the defence must be carried there where the attack is strongest. Lord

Northbrook was very much scandalized in a speech he delivered some days ago, because the recent legislation with respect to Ireland was characterized by my right hon. friend Mr. Lowther as robbery. Well, I am afraid Lord Northbrook must accustom himself to that emotion, because I think that description of it is likely to be very frequently repeated. And do not let him imagine that this is a mere Tory prejudice. I will not give an opinion of my own on the subject. I should, however, like to read to you the opinion of a man who is not, and never was, a Tory, and who has expressed his opinion quite clearly as to the character of the recent legislation in Ireland. These are the words of Lord Grey, published two months ago. He says:—"It is clear that under the Acts of 1870 and 1881 confiscation of property has taken place upon a scale unparalleled in any civilised nation in modern times." They are always telling us that the Liberal party has performed great things in the past. Well, be it so. Lord Grey was one of the men who performed them. Lord Grey was a Liberal with the same opinions at the time when Mr. Gladstone was a Tory. He has never shown any inclination to change his old opinions, or to desert his old colours, and he now stands in a position of absolute neutrality between the parties, and is singularly fitted by his long experience, his great abilities, his unspotted reputation, and his perfect freedom from any partisan prejudice to pass an unbiassed judgment on the events of recent times. As far as man can attain to the impartiality of history in his lifetime, Lord Grey is in that position. A man so placed has given you his verdict that the confiscation of these Irish Land Acts—which they tell you are so innocent—has been unparalleled in any civilised nation in modern times.

## MORE CAPITAL OR EMIGRATION.

Its effects in Ireland have been bad enough. You have there a population suffering from great misery. What is the remedy for that misery? Either to bring capital to employ them, or to induce them to go elsewhere. But that issue is closed by the Government by their unhappy policy with respect to the land. Capital is not deceived by the specious phrases with which the introduction of the Land Acts was covered, or by those appeals to justice that have been invented for a purpose and in order to suit the exigencies of the existing crisis. And until the impression of this unhappy legislation has worn away, and till we find by experience that the Government are animated by a better mind, capital will sooner go to Honduras than to Ireland. Well, the other remedy is emigration; but what hope have we to induce men to emigrate as long as they believe they have a fair and specious ground for believing that if they will only squeeze the Government they can obtain a great deal more than they have yet obtained. As long as there is more to be got by the practice of agitation and of outrage at home, they will not adopt that which is a healthy remedy for every population that cannot find sufficient exercise for its energies and sufficient support for its members at home—seeking new fields where better opportunities exist.

## THIS UNHAPPY LEGISLATION.

Both these remedies are closed to the Government by the policy they have pursued. This is not the only evil which this unhappy legislation has produced. It has produced an outbreak of those doctrines which are hostile to the existence of property and which we have not seen in our generation before — those doctrines

which hitherto have been comparatively confined to a foreign soil. You have heard of them in Scotland; you have heard of them in England; you have heard of them from the mouths of the Ministers themselves. You have heard Sir C. Dilke telling you that the whole population of this country were adverse to the rights of property. You have heard Mr. Chamberlain speaking of the owners of property as people who toil not neither do they spin, comparing them therein to the lilies of the field and bestowing upon them a compliment which, I am bound to say, they do not deserve. But the spread of these doctrines has already not been without its evil effects. You know how easily confidence is destroyed and investment is discouraged. There have come under my notice cases of important expenditure stopped by the doubt that men entertain as to the course which legislation may henceforth take. To all the many uncertainties which affect every kind of enterprise there is now added the greatest uncertainty of all—what will a Liberal Parliament do? And this is no slight matter at a time when such numbers of our fellow subjects are suffering from a want of employment. In consequence of this legislation there has been a general indisposition to sink and to advance capital, and in every case where capital is withdrawn from employment that means that the employment and the wages and the living of some working men has ceased, and therefore, it is that the community looks to the Conservatives of the City, because on the conservatism of the City a special responsibility rests. They constantly witness the working of this marvellous mechanism by which capital gives life to industry; they know better than any that the security of property is not mainly an affair of the propertied classes; they know that if any serious revolutionary legislation in this island is passed by Parliament, the immediate effect will be a contraction of business, a diminution of enterprise, and a timidity of investment which would practically leave its mark

in the starving of multitudes of people. Well, it is for you to watch over this inheritance which has come down to you. It is for you to struggle earnestly that the doctrines of property which have produced such splendid results in this country shall not receive any serious injury in our time. The result will depend upon the energy and the exertions of those who know the real magnitude of the interests that are involved, but they may be quite certain that in pursuing their duty, in strenuously resisting any of those specious and seductive proposals which are so rife in the present day, they are not supporting any egotistic or sectional interests, but that they are supporting the principle by which alone commerce can be animated, that they are supporting that confidence which is the breath of life to all human enterprise, and without which we must form the darkest auguries for the future of industry and the well-being of the people.

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*LIBERAL AND CONSERVATIVE  
POLICIES.*

(AT WATFORD, DECEMBER 6, 1883).

I have to thank you very heartily for the great kindness with which you have received the toast of the House of Lords. It is a toast which, I believe, is always kindly received in Conservative assemblies. We have recently had testimony from a distinguished quarter that its popularity is not so great on the other side of politics. Lord Hartington has told us that it has lost ground with those in the country who agree with him in opinion. He intimated, too, that I had said it had lost ground. In that he was rather dreaming. But though I believe the House of Lords stands as high as ever in the opinions of Conservatives, and in the opinions of those who have no definite politics at all, I think it is very probable



that in strict orthodox Liberal ranks its popularity does not stand very high.

THE OFFICE OF SAYING "AMEN."

Lord Hartington has a remedy for this. He suggests to us that if we would always do exactly what the Liberal party in the House of Commons wish, he thinks that we shall not meet with any resistance on the part of the Liberal party. Well, I think that is exceedingly probable. But I do not think it requires—without assuming or claiming too much for the House of Lords—I do not think it requires a body of their numbers and ability to perform the office which he designates for us. It is the office of saying "Amen." That office is performed usually to the entire satisfaction of all who hear him by a moderately remunerated clerk. I believe that the clerk deserves the full benefit of the position and never meets with any resistance on the part of the clergyman. But I cannot join in Lord Hartington's advice to the House of Lords. As soon as the House of Lords conceives that it is its duty simply to say "Amen" to whatever the House of Commons may be pleased to lay down, then I shall be the first to urge on the people of England that it is time to abolish the House of Lords. I say that not out of any disrespect to the House of Commons, but because, obviously, the only use a second Chamber can be is to correct anything, if there is anything to correct, in the decisions of the other House. Perhaps I should go a step further and say that I think that, without reference to my own political opinions, it is well the leaning of the second chamber should be in a Conservative direction; and for this reason, that if anything is done in a Conservative sense which the people of this country afterwards do not approve it is very easily remedied; but if anything is done in a Liberal sense which the people of this country do not approve, it



cannot be remedied. If a thing is improperly destroyed no power on earth, no good will, and no repentance can ever restore it again.

THE CABINET UNDER A GLASS HIVE.

Lord Hartington has been giving us other contributions to our political instruction. There is a very ingenious instrument secured by bee-keepers, by which you are able to look through pieces of glass and see how the bees do their work inside. Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain have been putting the Cabinet under a glass hive, and have enabled us to see how the discussions are conducted. We have long noted the curious phenomena that Mr. Chamberlain always has his way, and that Lord Hartington, in spite of the perfect plethora of wisdom with which he enters into the Cabinet, always in the end submits. But we have never until now seen the bold and high-falutin language with which Mr. Chamberlain treats his colleague, or the bated breath and whispering humbleness with which Lord Hartington responds. I confess I have watched this exhibition with feelings of considerable regret, because I know that there is a great wrestling match coming off in January between these two political athletes on the subject of reform. My wishes are all for Lord Hartington, but if I were a betting man my betting would always be on Mr. Chamberlain. You have only to compare the language and the manner of the two men, the splendid audacity of the doctrines which Mr. Chamberlain proposes, his utter indifference to results, how he casts aside as a fraud and a sham and a delusion that Irish representation which Lord Hartington is in feeble language pleading to consider. Lord Hartington, on the other hand, has no opinions of his own. I mean that in his speeches he is always asking you to consider this and remember that. He does not pledge himself to an opinion,

but he says it is worth while thinking of this and thinking of that, and then, when he has made a speech in this sense, he becomes frightened with the sound of his own voice, and in the next speech he thinks, perhaps, he has said too much, and hastens to assure the world that it is not the function of the Whig party to lead popular movements, but that it is the function of the Whig party to moderate and to mediate, and, in fact, to mix water with Mr. Chamberlain's wine. These are matters not of personal, but of public concern. You must all remember the last election. It was an election which, although the results gave an enormous preponderance of Liberal votes in the House of Commons, was really won by a very small preponderance of Liberal electors in the country, and I believe that many of these electors were induced to vote on the Liberal side by their trust in the remarkably sensible character of the utterances of Lord Hartington. I do not think that they will commit that error again. The utterances remain as sensible as ever, but we know by sad experience to how little practical result these sensible utterances lead.

#### THE REFORM BILL.

The matter on which these two great statesmen have exhibited to us the mode in which the counsels of the Cabinet are conducted is in a very doubtful and unsatisfactory condition. It appears probable, as far as I can judge, that we shall have the question of the representation of the people again before Parliament next year. It is not a matter of absolute certainty, for I observe that *The Times*, in an article which has all the air of being inspired, informs the world that Mr. Gladstone has not only kept the decision of this matter to himself, but that he absolutely refuses to tell his colleagues till the moment of Parliament assembling which way he is going to decide. I think it is

very likely that Mr. Gladstone is prudent in this matter. Perhaps it is a way of avoiding Cabinet dissensions. He has had reason more than once to lament Cabinet indiscretions and no doubt by this plan he hopes to obviate both evils. For ourselves, we are at present only spectators in this matter. I hear a good deal of pledges which the Conservative party are supposed to have given. Some people say that they are pledged to support the Suffrage Bill in the House of Lords. Some say that they are pledged to throw out a Household Suffrage Bill in the House of Lords. My impression is that neither the Conservative party nor anybody else can pledge themselves what to do with a Bill which they have never seen, and which probably does not exist in the mind of any human being at this moment. But if we pass from the region of pledges to the region of prediction, it is not rash to say that if the coming Reform Bill at all resembles the picture which its friends draw of it it is likely to meet with very earnest resistance on the part of the Conservative party. It is very difficult to understand the position which Ministers themselves have adopted in regard to this measure. It is certainly a measure of importance. It will create a considerable shifting probably of the electoral power. Its tendency will be to efface the influence of the farmers, which certainly will be a grave and, I think, a very unfortunate result in political affairs. Mr. Childers tells us that it will be a great deal more than this—that it is the chief one of a series of measures which is to have the effect of revolutionizing our arrangements more than anything which has been done since 1689. Truly, when Cabinet Ministers do not try to explain the changes, the organic changes, which they are going to introduce, this is a formidable picture to receive from the mouth of one who, it would be supposed, knew. And it is not encouraging

that when Mr. Childers is telling us that this is the most formidable revolution which we shall have had for the last 200 years, Lord Hartington should be at the same time telling us that the subject of Parliamentary representation in one particular, which, by the way, he does not name, has not yet been properly considered. So that we have one Cabinet Minister telling us that the changes in our Parliamentary representation are to be the greatest revolution that has been effected for the last two centuries, and another Cabinet Minister telling us that the subject has not been properly considered. And the evident fact is that the essential points appear to require arrangement in the minds of the Cabinet. Is Ireland to be included, or is it not? Lord Hartington looks upon such an inclusion with apprehension. Mr. Chamberlain considers it a fraud and a plain sham to do anything less. Are the 40s. householders—the most ancient franchise in the country—to be abolished? Nobody seems to know, and Lord Hartington is of opinion that the subject requires a good deal of consideration. Then, as to the distribution plan to be proposed, it is to be proposed at the same time as this arrangement with regard to the franchise. Mr. Chamberlain cannot tell us what connection there is between the two, and Lord Hartington is of opinion that there would be great difficulties in the way of separating the two. Perhaps, after all, the most discouraging part of this variety of opinion is that while one Cabinet Minister is telling us that this is a great revolution, and another is telling us that it is in his opinion a subject which ought to be considered, a third is telling us that any plan short of manhood suffrage is not likely to prove a satisfactory settlement of the question, nor to procure any respite from agitation. Under these circumstances, I confess I look forward to the prospect of the discussion in Parliament on the measure with anything but a feeling that it is likely to be very acceptable to the Conser-

vative party. But a much more important thing has really been brought to light by these Ministerial dissensions than the lines upon which the measure I have referred to is likely to be framed.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CABINET.

We have the right to know whether the old theory or a new theory of Parliamentary government is to prevail. We have a Cabinet which, as a Cabinet, looks upon manhood suffrage as dangerous, and utterly resists the disestablishment of the English Church. Yet we have a Minister in that Cabinet, wielding the authority of that Cabinet, declaring that any other solution than that of manhood suffrage would be to deprive millions of their right, and that the property of the Established Church belongs to every section of the nation. Now, it is perfectly true that this is the legal position of affairs. The Queen has, of course, the right to call in any one she wills to her councils. It is perfectly legal that Mr. Chamberlain should be a member of the same Government as that to which Lord Granville and the Marquis of Hartington belong. I believe it would be quite legal if Mr. Davitt and Mr. Bradlaugh were also members of the present Cabinet; but we must remember that we live under a system of unwritten law. Your Parliamentary Constitution, of which you are so proud, is written in no statutes; it rests on long tradition and understandings honourably observed, and the basis of that Parliamentary government is that while a man who is outside the Cabinet is responsible for himself only and for the words which he himself utters, members of a Cabinet are responsible for each other. That is Parliamentary government—that is the essence of it. What Mr. Chamberlain does and says upon the burning and vital questions of the day is as much the responsibility of Lord Hartington in the eyes of the Constitution, as it has

been received for a hundred years, as it is the responsibility of Mr. Chamberlain himself. If you depart from that sound tradition our Parliamentary government must decay. The exhibition you have seen of Mr. Chamberlain uttering the wildest and most extreme opinions, and yet remaining the colleague of men whose horror of those opinions is well-known—if no measure be taken in regard to it, if they continue quietly to sit by his side in the Cabinet, you may depend upon it being the beginning of a sure decay in Parliamentary government, of the system under which you have flourished so well.

#### CONSERVATIVES HAVE NO PROGRAMME.

Now, we are often asked whether we have any programme on these political questions such as those which I have dealt with. We have no programme, because we are very sceptical of the benefit of raising such political questions at all. As a party we do not advocate organic change. Admitting that organic change is sometimes inevitable, we regard it as an evil, and we do not desire to give it any assistance we can avoid. But we do that, not simply because organic change is in itself a hazardous experiment, but because it occupies time and energies which are wanted for other purposes. Parliament has great duties to perform, and if it is perpetually occupied with the consideration of its own constitution those duties will not be performed. Ever since the fall of Lord Melbourne, I think, every Liberal Government has proposed a Reform Bill. They have not always been successful, but they have always had a Reform Bill to propose. Lord Russell's Government of 1846 proposed one before it fell. Lord Aberdeen's Government proposed one. Lord Palmerston's Government during the Crimean war did not, but Lord Palmerston's Government in 1859 did. Lord Russell's Govern-



ment in 1865 proposed one. Mr. Gladstone's first Government proposed and carried the Ballot Bill, and Mr. Gladstone's Government, in 1880, proposed a Reform Bill. What the Liberal party has done, I imagine, it will do again. As far as our experience extends, whenever the Liberal party comes into office it will see what can be done for the purpose of preventing the necessity of leaving office again by manipulating the electorate. When they first succeed to office they do not propose reform, but when their popularity appears to be waning, and the end of their period of office appears to be drawing nigh, then they begin to think what can be done to alter the machinery of the Constitution and so prevent the danger of the Liberal party being driven from office. It is rather unfair to object because the Conservatives cannot by their principles play the same game. A much more serious objection to this is that it is a fatal hindrance to the utility of Parliament altogether. I believe there are some ships in our Navy that have never gone to sea at all. The reason is that there has been such a perpetual succession of changes suggested by ingenious persons that they have no sooner gone out of dock than they have gone in to be altered. They much resemble the British Constitution in Liberal hands. No sooner has one change been effected than in their minds the time has come for effecting another. A man who is always under the doctor, a ship that is always undergoing changes, and a Constitution that is always undergoing reform are three very useless entities. The result is that a greater part of the time and attention of Parliament is occupied not only by the measures themselves, but by the political passions and political efforts and controversies which precede or are collateral to them, and the main object for which Parliament exists is left comparatively in the background.

## “MY IDEA OF CONSERVATIVE POLICY.”

My idea of Conservative policy, though I do not exclude the necessity of organic change when that necessity is clearly proved, is to entertain those measures which are directly to the benefit of the nation, and not to be perpetually improving the machine by which these measures are to be passed. I will give you an agricultural instance. There are many things we desire to be passed that cannot be passed because Parliament has no energy to give to them. There is one question, I will undertake to say, that in the minds of persons at all connected with agriculture transcends in importance every other, and that is the mode in which disease can be prevented from reaching the herds and flocks upon which our prosperity depends. The change that has come over the spirit of agriculture in recent times has tended to drive this question into extreme prominence. Falling prices and variable weather have caused pastoral industry more and more to take the place of the industry of the plough, but both of them are absolutely dependent upon some kind of security against the epidemics by which the capital of the agriculturist is at present menaced. We hear a great deal of the importance of small holdings. We hear a great deal of the hardships which the dwellers in towns undergo. But how are you to expect that beef or milk will become cheap if small capitalists are entirely, or almost entirely, prevented from joining in the task of furnishing sustenance to the inhabitants of the great towns? A poor man knows that if he sinks his little capital in cattle it may all be swept away in a moment, and that he may be absolutely denuded of his property in consequence of the diseases which our legislation hitherto has failed to stop. I only give you this as one example out of many. It is only one, but it is one which presses with exceptional severity on the agricultural

community, and I cannot help thinking if so much of our time had not been thrown away upon the conflict of classes; if so much of our time had not been given to these organic changes which are so interesting and so sterile, we should have found some remedy for the great evil which is at present continuing the depression of the industry by which we live. But do not let me be supposed to have introduced this as anything but an instance. I believe that the duties which are waiting for Parliament to perform are many and widespread. There is no doubt that we stand at a critical point in the social history of our time. For fifty years the prosperity of this country has been borne up by those marvellous inventions in locomotion which have done so much to stimulate trade and to give employment. But the railway system is completed; the effects that it has produced, if not ceasing altogether, are proceeding at a much slacker pace, and it is evident that there is some halting point in the national prosperity which we find it difficult to explain. May it not be that we are taking up the thread of our economic history at the point where it was, or in some degree at the point where it was when the invention of railways came to our aid half a century ago? Be that as it may, I think no one can look abroad, no one can open his ears and hear the tales of increasing misery and decreasing employment, of the conflicts constantly going on between employers and employed, without feeling that we live in a very grave state of things, and that the most imperative calls are made on the energies of all who love their country to do what they can to ward off the evils that may come upon us if misery should increase, and if the means of subsistence should practically be outstripped by the growth of the population. These are very grave and serious dangers. I am quite aware that it is possible for Parliament to meddle too much, that it is possible for Parliament to meddle un-

wisely ; but perhaps the greatest error of all that Parliament could commit would be to treat these symptoms and these evils with indifference and to spend its whole time in the vain conflicts which are raised by the theories of philosophers and the ambitions of rival politicians. Depend upon it no real use of the energies of Parliament can be made, no effective remedies can be applied to any of the evils under which we suffer, as long as our exertions and our time are spent in fomenting the differences by which the classes are divided and in sustaining the controversies which furnish you with so much interest for the moment, but which bring no lasting and real relief ; which may advance the careers and distinguish the names of individual men, but which have no benefits to confer upon the real needs and necessities of the people.

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### *THE CONSERVATIVE REVIVAL.*

(AT GLASGOW, OCTOBER 1, 1884.)

It is a great pleasure and honour for one connected with the working of the Conservative party in London to meet those who bear the burden and heat of the day in the country, and to whose exertions whatever prosperity and whatever tenacity may attach to the labours of the Conservative party is really in the long run and by all justice due. This is owing to your patience and resolution and hopefulness in adversity ; and to the display of those qualities on your part, on the part of friends joining with you, each in your several localities, we owe it that Conservatism in Scotland has not drooped and died away in the presence of blows which in past times it has received, and at the present moment its prospects are brightening and opening every day. Of course we have an

up-hill game to fight. I fancy that this country throughout its existence has had an up-hill game to fight; but it has always fought it well, and has placed itself in a position very far out of proportion either to its popular or its natural resources solely by the display of those national characteristics throughout every period of its historical career. I am proud to think that the Conservative party in Scotland inherit the full measure of the qualities that belong to their countrymen. Knowing that they are right, they stick to their colours in good report and in evil report, and mean to win at last. Do not let any passing discouragement or any victory of our opponents due to transitory causes dishearten any of those who are joined with us in this great struggle.

#### GROWTH OF CONSERVATISM.

No one, I think, can watch the operation of permanent causes without seeing that there is throughout the country a slow but steady drift towards Conservative opinion, especially among the young. The issues which divided men in past times have to a great extent drifted away. They are forgotten, or some settlement has been arrived at, or they have ceased to occupy the minds and the attention of men. New issues are springing up which present themselves in a very different phase, in a very different complexion to those who have already pledged themselves in the political fight on the one hand, and to those who come up to it new, fresh, and unprejudiced on the other. But although you will see many also who have called themselves Liberals during their lives who now feel themselves bound with sinking and unwilling steps to follow the lead which is given to their party, those who are not tied by any such pledges, or those who have the courage to pull themselves away, recognise that we are fighting new battles on a new field, and that, if it was possible now to call back into life the Liberals of past times, the most famous

of them would be ranged upon our side. If you look at the structure of the Liberal party you will see that its numerical preponderance is due, not to the fact of the dominance of any set of opinions, but that, by great dexterity, and by the tenacity of an ancient organisation, the two sets of opinions which are in reality diametrically opposed to each other are able to make truce for a time and to pull together. But it depends entirely how long that dexterity can be maintained, how long leaders will be found who will have that gift of sophistry that they will be able to persuade their followers on either side, whose interests are really clashing and opposed, that the same measures can be equally favourable to both sides. It depends how long the aristocratic Whig and the violent and advanced Radical can be induced to move in the same line by honeyed words and empty platitudes. It depends upon how long what is called the Liberal party—which is really a confederation of independent and opposing schools—can be brought to act together in political life. It is a circumstance of disadvantage which must attach in growing measure to your opponents, while the unity of sentiment on our own part is a strength which must tell more and more as time goes on upon our side. Remember that the progress of Conservatism has already been very great. I can remember almost when the Conservative cause seemed as hopeless in London and Westminster as to some minds it may seem in this city now, or as it was in this city, I should, perhaps, more correctly say, four years ago.

#### THE WAND OF THE GREAT MAGICIAN.

But, as I say, issues change, men change, the wand of the great magician cannot be waved for ever. The spell which is due to individual ability and talent cannot obtain more than a transitory triumph for opinions



which are not really in consonance with the feelings of the country or with the tendencies of the age. But I believe that in Scotland, as in other parts of the country, you will see that growth which we can already recognize advancing by rapid stages to a mighty and imposing result. You have only to go on working together as you have hitherto done, not allowing yourselves to be discouraged by any temporary reverses, not believing that any evil day, when it comes, must necessarily be permanent, but trying to convince the world that in the steadiness and stability of our institutions lies the great hope of industry and of the working man, trying to impress upon him that any adventurous policy or change at home which sets class against class, and fills all men's minds with disquiet and mistrust, is a dangerous thing for industry, and is the most certain poison which trade and commerce can suffer under. If you can bring these facts before the minds of the working men they will observe as time goes on that a policy which appeals to discontent does not produce internal prosperity. They will see that a policy which neglects the Empire of England does not open to us the markets of the world. They will see that the path of national prosperity and national dishonour are not parallel, and they will recognize with this that the party which sustained the old institutions—institutions under which England grew great—which upholds the traditions under which her name has ever been illustrious abroad—that to that party most rightly belongs, and most safely can be confided, the interests of the complicated industry and commerce on which the existence of so many millions of our countrymen depends.

*THE HOUSE OF LORDS.*

[In the evening, Lord Salisbury addressed the Conservative Associations of the West of Scotland in St. Andrew's Hall, which was crowded by an enthusiastic assemblage. The Duke of Montrose occupied the chair, and on the platform were many noblemen and gentlemen connected with Western Scotland.]

Lord Salisbury said,—In thanking you for the hearty kindness of your welcome, I feel divided between two duties. My first duty is to believe what the Prime Minister says at a roadside station—I forget its name, Merlin, I think—where he happened to meet a crowd of enthusiastic people from the country side. He was stimulated into declaring that the whole nation was on his side. On the other hand, if I believe the Prime Minister, how am I to deal with the testimony of my own eyes and ears? It seems to me that I come across a marvellous number of exceptions. In August I had the privilege of speaking to some 50,000 or 60,000 exceptions at Manchester. My friends were speaking to something like the same number at Nostell in Yorkshire; and last night I thought I saw a considerable number of exceptions at Glasgow Central Station. Here there is a continuation of the revelation of exceptions to this universal rule of the Prime Minister. It seems that, having taken a railway journey from Wales to Scotland, he has concluded that every person who came to see and cheer him—an honour to which he was justly entitled—in the first place was necessarily on his side, and secondly, represented the whole people of England. It does so happen that he went into parts of Scotland that were very particularly bound to him, and where he had an extraordinary number of adherents. But I mention this calculation of his because I see that he raises the extraordinary contention that, by the

suffrage of the people of England, gathered in this fashion out of windows of railway carriages, the powers of the State are to guide their course. He tells us it is certain the people of England are on his side, in consequence of these demonstrations; and that, therefore, all who hold an opposite opinion are bound to yield. This doctrine, that you can determine the wishes of the people of England by demonstrations, or processions, or meetings, or addresses on railway platforms, is utterly new and utterly untenable. It is utterly new that we should accept from such indications as these the opinions which the people of this country have really formed. I say it is not permissible to accept such a test, though not because I desire—as I have been falsely represented to desire—to throw anything like contempt on the opinions of those who take part in such demonstrations. It is not from demonstrations of that kind that you can gather what the opinions of the people are. You know what has taken place in this town. You know there was a great demonstration here. You know that those who organized it claimed an assemblage of some 75,000 people; and you know that some ingenious person, counting by means that are certainly not open to challenge, ascertained that 23,000 was the full number of those present. That gives you the correction which you may apply to all the numbers of all the Liberal meetings of which you hear. Divide them by three and you will get approximately the right amount. But just consider what that 23,000 means. These processions are organized with care, and numbers of them are brought from a considerable distance in a country where the population, within one hour's distance from where we are, numbers no less than one million persons. There are 500,000 in Glasgow alone. Lanarkshire reaches nearly up to a million. Most parts of the shire are excessively populated, and Renfrewshire, which has a quarter of a million, would more than finish the tale,

besides what Stirlingshire, Dumbartonshire, and other counties might give. What relation has 23,000 to 1,000,000? Why, it is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. And do you mean to tell me, when I know the opinion of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., that I know the opinion of them all? That is the contention of the Prime Minister. The truth is that there is no way of ascertaining who are on one side and who are on the other, except by the elementary process of counting them. There is no other way of ascertaining it save by summoning them to the poll, where they can be constitutionally counted. The indications, such as they are, do not, in my mind, agree with the bold and boastful assumption of the Prime Minister. We have had some elections since this question was before the public. We have had three elections in the North. The election for Ross-shire was a small constituency, and as it had not been disputed for thirty years, very little could be drawn from the figures that were the result. But the three that took place in the south of the island were of very large constituencies—Mid Surrey, Hampshire, and—what was the other? Yes, Brighton; and there you had, by the only test on which you can rely, a proof that the majority of the people who went to the poll did not agree with the contention of the Prime Minister. Well, I have touched on that point for the purpose of dismissing it. I reject as utterly unconstitutional and new the idea that by those who come out in processions or who come to meetings, the opinion of the people can be discerned. I have received innumerable addresses from associations in all parts of the country, which, at least, convinces me of this, that the whole Conservative party is thoroughly of our mind in the contest in which we are engaged, and that a considerable party of the other side of politics are very unwilling to follow their leaders upon this point. Therefore, as you know that it was really a very small majority that carried the last election against the Conservatives—a majority, I believe, consisting

of 2,000 or 3,000 persons—it follows that, as far as the evidence goes, if the Conservative party and a portion of the Liberal party are on our side, it must be a matter of extreme doubt whether there is any majority, such as the other side can claim.

“WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?”

Now, putting aside the evidence of demonstrations, which are very useful for bringing the party together, for inducing men to work for a common cause, for assuring them that they have co-operation, but which are not useful as a substitute for the constitutional process of election—putting that aside, let us inquire what is all this agitation which the Ministers of the Crown have thought fit to raise. What is it about? You know they have changed their minds a good deal upon the point. They began by loud professions that opinion should be spontaneous, and that no Minister would take part in demonstrations outside his own constituency. But, somehow, Lord Northbrook was found at Manchester, which is not in his own constituency; Mr. Chamberlain is going to the Potteries and to Wales, and I do not think Mr. Gladstone has strictly stuck to his own constituency. He tells, us, of course, that his resolution has been shattered by spontaneous outbursts of patriotism which he witnessed at railway stations; but I do not think that he should have started north with so fragile a resolution as that. However, what is it all about; what is it of which these reluctant agitators complain? They tell us that the House of Lords has rejected this Bill. But what is the effect of that action of the House of Lords? If we take it at its worst, if we take it as they look upon it, the whole of the evil for which they have thought it necessary to make these great exertions and to break so many promises which they had made to themselves, is that the House of Lords has put



off the enactment of the Franchise Bill. I have to ask what is the exact magnitude of that evil? What is the heinousness of that crime? I shall not measure it absolutely; I shall measure it relatively. I shall point out to you that there is a Government which, possessing a large majority in Parliament, has delayed the Franchise Bill, not one year nor two years, but four years, and that the whole of the crime for which the House of Lords is so furiously arraigned is doing precisely, in a much smaller degree, what Her Majesty's Government have of their own free will done since the last dissolution of Parliament. That question leads me to another. Is this agitation absolutely honest? It seems to me, for the reason I have given you, a little exaggerated. But let us see what defence there is for it. There is a great temptation to be dishonest. It was a very great temptation to Liberal members, who knew that all the miscarriages of the last few years were about to be brought to the bar of the people, and that they would be tried at the bar of their constituencies for the disgrace of Majuba Hill, for the utter mismanagement of South Africa, so that that colony is slipping from our hands, for the needless blood and treasure that has been poured out in Egypt, with no corresponding advantage either to the interests of the British Empire or to the interests, the highest interests, of humanity. They knew that for this and for the disturbed state of Ireland—Ireland worse than she ever was before, for expenditure constantly rising, for trade constantly falling, for the distress that is spreading like a disease into every class of the community—they knew that for all these things the time was coming when they must answer before those who had invested them with the mandate they had so ill performed. There were enormous temptations to the Liberal members and to the Liberal Government to avoid that trial if they could. They could not under the law avoid it except in one way.



They might utterly change the tribunal before which they were sent. They might so alter the tribunal, by fastening on the enfranchisement of two millions of people upon the old divisions of constituencies, which were not meant for a uniform franchise—they might so alter the character of the tribunal that, in the ignorance in the newness of these political problems, they might obtain the acquittal which, from experienced guides, it was impossible they could hope for. That was an enormous temptation. What have they to say to show that all this agitation against the House of Lords, all this pretended zeal for the liberty of the people, is anything more than a screen for the device by which they hope their misdoings may be hidden?

PROCEDURE ON THE REFORM BILL.

Let us look into and examine the character of their excuse. They tell us that it is impossible to pass a Franchise Bill and redistribution in a single year. In three weeks' time we shall assemble at Westminster. What do you imagine a Minister would do who had no such terrible record to efface, and could afford to meet his countrymen face to face, assuming that he did not choose to dissolve—which I still think is really the constitutional proceeding under the circumstances? Assuming that he did not choose to dissolve, what do you think that Ministers like Lord Palmerston or Lord Russell would have done? They would have passed the Franchise Bill during the autumn session, they would have done that with ease, and when it was passed, or while it was passing, they would have introduced their Redistribution Bill. They would have sent each of those Bills as soon as they could up to the House of Lords. The House of Lords would have been able to deal with them together, and probably the whole controversy would have been solved in a single session. What is there

to hinder a Minister from taking that course? He tells you that redistribution cannot be passed in a single session with enfranchisement, but if redistribution cannot be passed in a single ordinary session, our fate is terrible indeed, for we never can have any redistribution at all. It is after all only a session we have to look to; and if the question is so complex, that in their peculiar way of managing the House of Commons, the present Government cannot pass a Redistribution Bill within the limits of an ordinary session, the chance of getting it is relegated to an indefinite future. We must assume that they can pass a Redistribution Bill in a single session. Well, then, what possible difference is there between passing a Redistribution Bill introduced this autumn, before next August, and passing a Bill after the Franchise Bill shall have been passed in an ordinary session? What difference is there between the two processes? There is exactly the same amount of time at their disposal for passing a Redistribution Bill after this Autumn Session is concluded, as there would be if they approached it under any ordinary circumstances. But supposing that the distance from February to August is too short, it is not the law of the Medes and the Persians, that we should prorogue in August. There is nothing to prevent the Government prolonging the Session as long as they like until the question is settled. That being the state of the case, is it not evident that what they are anxious for is not that enfranchisement and redistribution should pass during the next session, but that they should get their dissolution with the old divisions. By that unfair device, being masters of the House of Commons, they will pass whatever Redistribution Bill the interests of their party require.

## YEARNING AFTER THE AMERICAN SENATE.

It is evident enough that the Prime Minister in his excursion to Scotland has had something in view beyond the passing of an early Franchise and Redistribution Bill. He has wanted to raise a quarrel as a cloud in which all other questions damaging to his Government might be lost, and if you will observe that the support which he has obtained, such as it is, throughout the island, has been mainly drawn, not from moderate men, not much from the more moderate section of those who supported him at the last election, but it has been drawn from those who wish to go a great deal further and who desire as they put it, that all hereditary jurisdiction and power should disappear. That is the class of allies to whom he has appealed, and in his latest speech on his journey home he was obliged to apologize for the mildness of his language. He said to them, "Don't mind how mildly I draw it now; after you have got the power you will be able to do with all these things just exactly as you like," and the question that he has really raised before the mind of the British electors is the question—the momentous question—of the character of your second chamber and what powers it should possess. You will observe that he began in language apparently moderate. In his two speeches at Edinburgh he seemed to keep his threats somewhat in the background. But as he went on from station to station, more and more excited by every passing crowd perhaps, and possibly stimulated to greater condensation of his observations by the rapidity with which the engineer was in the habit of putting on the engine, these threats became more defined, and his destructive policy became more apparent; and it has become a matter for you, the electors of Great Britain, seriously to consider the question of the powers and the duty of the second chamber. Some people say that it

great folly to raise this question, and that it ought never to be brought to the minds of the public. I do not believe in that policy in the least. Nothing is safe in this country which the public cannot discuss. If the House of Lords is to stand, as I believe it will, it will stand because the British people believe that it is the best arrangement that can obtain, and not because they have forgotten its existence. There are some people—a gentleman at the end of the hall there, I think, is one of them—who think there should be no second chamber at all; that is the opinion held by a gentleman for whose independence and masculine character of mind I have very great respect, I mean Mr. Cowen, of Newcastle. But I do not believe it is very generally shared in this country. I think there is a general feeling that the despotism of a single chamber would be the most dangerous of all despotisms. At all events this is quite certain—it is an experiment which has never been tried yet on any large scale upon the surface of the earth. The Americans, as you know, have a Senate—I wish we could institute it in this country—marvellous in its efficiency and strength. The French have a Senate, to which perhaps all the same eulogies cannot be applied, but to whose protective character they justly cling; and the Swiss have this remarkable rule—that all laws of any importance must be submitted to the vote of the people themselves before they can be adopted into the constitution of the country. So that you see in those who have gone the farthest in the Republican direction there is none that has dispensed with some check or control over the single chamber to which Mr. Cowen trusts, and certainly if a single chamber could be entrusted with the destinies of the country it would not be a House of Commons elected for seven years. It would have to be brought much more closely under the purview of the constituencies. It would have to be elected like the American House of Representatives.

## THE FUNCTIONS OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

But I do not think the question whether we are to have a second chamber or not is one that has come within the range of practical politics. The vast majority of the people of this country are decidedly of opinion that we ought to have a second chamber. The question then is what powers ought that second chamber to have, and that is the question that Mr. Gladstone has raised on these platform—railway-platform—speeches. I am not surprised that the question has excited some emotion, because undoubtedly it is the question of all others which interests the future of good government in this country, and I am very anxious to draw your attention closely to that view which the Prime Minister has taken up upon this question, for it may bear importantly upon the fate of this country in the future. His view at first was that a second chamber was a very good thing if it never contradicted the first chamber. He said distinctly that it must be in danger if ever it came into conflict with the representatives of the people. All I have to answer is, that the only use of a second chamber is to remedy the defects, mistakes, or whatever they may be, of the first chamber. If it is never to contradict the first chamber it had better not exist at all. You know that sometimes people put two locks upon their safe, and give separate keys to separate people. If they had the same keys and gave them to the same people you would think they were very absurd persons. But that would be exactly the absurdity of having two legislative assemblies which were bound to follow exactly the prescriptions of the Minister of the day. The one would be no check upon the other. It would be like having a court of appeal of which the first rule should be, that it must never reverse a decision of a court of first instance. What use would such a court



of appeal be? I have been taken to task for calling the House of Lords a flywheel. I will go back to an historical simile. I will take the Duke of Wellington's simile. He said it was a way-chain, or, as in these days we should say, a vacuum-brake. Suppose you set up a brake, of which the first condition should be that it never stopped the wheels going round, what would you think of the wisdom of the persons who set up that brake? That is exactly the wisdom of those who maintain that the duty of the House of Lords is in all things to submit and say heartily amen to the decisions of the House of Commons. Well, as he went on, I think Mr. Gladstone saw the absurdity of this contention. He was not prepared to admit our contention, which appears to me plain and simple. We say that both Houses of Parliament are independent of each other, but it is perfectly true that there may arise an occasion in which there is an insoluble problem, in which the two contradict each other, and it is essential that some decision should be arrived at. Who is to decide? Our answer is simple. The people are to decide. Mr. Gladstone answers that he could never consent to so degrading a condition, because, while he is sent about his business and is canvassing Mid Lothian we are sitting easily in our arm-chairs. Of course, if the Constitution of Great Britain is managed for the purpose of the convenience and comfort of those who are at the time members of Parliament, I quite agree with him that his answer is unanswerable. If the only object is to prevent that inconvenience to the estimable people who may be sent down to canvass their constituents, I quite admit that we cannot admit the proposition we have assumed. But our view is that, unless the House of Commons acts in accordance with the will of the country it is acting in departure from its true functions and mission, and that it ought not to complain if, upon good and sufficient grounds, especially when a Parlia-



ment has lasted many years and is verging to its close, and is, in fact, almost within twelve months of its close—it ought not to complain if it is called upon to submit to the judgment of those to whose decision its power is entirely due. But Mr. Gladstone will not admit this theory of the relation of the two Houses. He has abandoned, I think, the idea that the House of Lords is to submit in everything to the House of Commons. Well, then, what has he got to say? “You are not bound to submit always, but you are bound to submit now.” I have no doubt he states that in good faith, but he must see that every succeeding Minister, whenever he is in a difficulty, would always make use of the same arguments. Are we to say we are only to submit when the Prime Minister takes the trouble to go to many railway stations making many speeches? Is the House of Lords to fall when, like Jericho, the trumpets have been sounded seven times round their walls? Mr. Gladstone sounds his trumpet with considerable effect, for I am bound to say he has done more than his stipulated task, for I think he has stopped at a good deal more than seven railway stations. But the weakness of that theory, elegant and original as it would be, is that, I am afraid, in course of time the Prime Minister would find it a bore whenever he wanted to pass a measure to have to go through this railway station ceremonial, and I am afraid he would take to sending a subordinate, and I am afraid the result would be that the House of Lords would have to yield to the peregrinations of a Mr. Chamberlain, or even to the peregrinations of a Mr. Dodson. I do not think that many of the peers would feel that it was worth while for them to give much attention to public affairs if that was the condition on which their independence was to be exercised.

C

A SOLEMN SHAM.

Mr. Forster comes forward with another ground. He says this is a special occasion—this is the matter which only concerns the House of Commons and the people, and does not concern the House of Lords at all. But it is impossible to look upon the House of Lords as having a power which, as a power, has no interest in the House of Commons, or in the people of this country. My impression is that whatever concerns the people of this country concerns the House of Lords in the highest degree. But is it true that this is a matter in which specially the House of Lords should not interfere? I think, on the contrary, it is a matter specially requiring their attention. No matter what Second Chamber you have, however you elect it, wherever you get it from, whatever controlling power there is, this matter of altering the constitution of the House of Commons is the one thing over which a second chamber should exercise a jealous and vigilant eye. Mr. Gladstone says that it is the irresponsible against the responsible power. I maintain that when they are dealing with the alteration of their own constitution and of those who elect them, the House of Commons is just as irresponsible as the House of Peers. Suppose there was a board of directors who had, or assumed, the power of saying, “We do not particularly like this body of shareholders that we have got, we will select some shareholders whom we particularly dislike, and we shall see that they shall only have one vote. Others whom we like better shall have two votes, while others whom we like better still shall have four votes.” Well now, should you say that that board of directors was a responsible one, a body responsible to the shareholders? If they have that power of altering the character of the masses to whom they appeal, they cease to be responsible to any man at all. A

servant who may choose his own master at his will is not responsible to any master at all, and that is the position which the House of Commons are taking. They are changing the tribunal to which they appeal, the master which they serve, the votes on which they depend. They are as much acting without reference to the judgment of those who sent them there as if they had never been elected at all. It is, therefore, so far from the truth that it is a matter with which the House of Lords have no right. It is a matter which, if the House of Lords had neglected to deal with it, it would have been so utterly faithless to its mission, so utterly regardless of the functions it is appointed to perform, that the English people would have justly thrown it aside with contempt. I have said that there is a certain number of people who wish to dispense with a second chamber altogether, I cannot agree with them, but I agree with them infinitely more than with the policy with respect to the second chamber which the Prime Minister is pursuing. He is not anxious to alter or get rid of the second chamber, but he is anxious to disgrace and humiliate it. He is anxious to strip it of all power, to deprive it of all consideration, but to leave it there as a solemn sham, a mere masquerade on legislation, in order to screen the uncontrolled power which he and the Caucus will exercise over all matters. He tells us that of all things we ought to beware of the fear of being thought afraid. Well, I readily admit that in his foreign policy he has been free from the fear of being thought afraid. I will admit that in his dealings in South Africa he has not only incurred the suspicion but something like the reality of being afraid, and those who think that the results in South Africa are eminently satisfactory, will doubtless recommend the following of the same policy with regard to the House of Lords. To my mind there is no danger to liberty greater than that which would be involved in leaving the House of

Lords destitute of real power, but possessed of that pretence of it which would lull the people into security, and induce them to allow the Prime Minister to have sway without supervision or control.

THE REAL DANGER TO FREEDOM.

There are some people I regret to say—and the Prime Minister is among them—who so use language as though it was a worthy object of fear on the part of the enlightened and powerful people of this country lest the aristocracy should obtain a dangerous political power. I should have thought any one who had studied the history of the world, and could read the signs of the times, would know that if freedom runs any dangers it is certainly not from any possible revival of the power of the aristocracy. It is in no new direction that your fears have to look. If you will study history you will find that freedom, when it has been destroyed, has always been destroyed by those who shelter themselves under the cover of its forms, and who speak its language with unparalleled eloquence and vigour. It is in commencements of individual power that democratic freedom has hitherto invariably ended; they have always been begun in a pretence that there has grown up an organisation, a power, by which the reality of freedom would be destroyed. I do not say, it would be absurd to say, that you are in any danger of such a fate as met Roman freedom under Augustus or French freedom under Napoleon, but I do say that the danger, though very different in degree, is the same in kind. If you have any danger to fear to the free working of our institutions, it is from the growth of the power of the wirepuller, centred in the Caucus under the direction of the Prime Minister—master of the House of Commons, master of the House of Lords, nay, yielding but apparent and simulated obedience

to the orders of the Sovereign, gathering into his own hands every power in the State, and using them so that when the time of renewal of powers comes, his influence may be overwhelming and his powers may be renewed. That is the real danger which you have to fear. And look in all this discussion how everything centres in the power of the Prime Minister. The Sovereign, he was careful to tell us at Carlisle, acts entirely under the advice of the Minister. The House of Lords, in all important matters, is to be under the foot of the Prime Minister. The House of Commons, governed by the Caucus, is absolutely at the disposal of the Prime Minister. The old constitutional remedy was dissolution, if there was any doubt whether the House of Commons was in accord with the feeling of the people. Who is to decide on dissolution? Not the Sovereign, not the House of Lords, no one except the very person whose conduct is arraigned, and whose powers are called in question, the Prime Minister himself. Do you expect that under such a system the people will have any real hold over the conduct of affairs? Everything is to be centred, according to Mr. Gladstone, in this one devouring grasp; everything is to be sacrificed that the Prime Minister may be supreme.

#### RUSSIAN DIPLOMACY.

Gentlemen, in addressing the House of Lords and the country, the Prime Minister has used an argument to which I have not adverted, because I feel it to be humiliating; but I must notice it in a word. He has always adopted towards the House of Lords very much the language that Russia adopts in her diplomatic correspondence with any of the smaller countries that she is gradually going to devour. That correspondence is marked by the highest moral character. There is the greatest profession of high and disinterested motives.

There is nothing in diplomacy like it, and there is always a regretful indication that the small Power, be it Turkey or any other, should not do exactly what Russia wishes. Then come circumstances which will be far too strong for the virtuous Government of Russia, and Russia will be forced—the virtuous Government of Russia—to destroy that small Power. The Prime Minister has been learning much in the Russian school, and he evidently has learned a good deal of the Russian mode of diplomacy; throughout his speeches that is very much the tone he adopts to the House of Lords. He is always the good man, the excellent Conservative driven against his will by the obstinacy of the House of Lords to undertake a crusade for their destruction. Now, my objection to this mode of argument is, that it assumes a moral condition in the House of Lords which I do not think can be worthily imputed to them. He seems to think that the most effective argument to guide us in the course that we, in the discharge of our duties, may think right, is that we may possibly keep our power, or the semblance of our power, and that if we do not we shall be destroyed. He seems to think that the whole object for which we exist is for the purpose of keeping up a power, or an appearance of power, in the House of Lords. Now this is not done with any intention of invective or with any intention of casting a reproach upon the House of Lords. It is done quietly and simply, as though he thought it was the most natural motive by which human beings could be moved. I am bound therefore to suppose that he and his subordinates are moved by this motive—that when they are in possession of the duties or functions conferred upon them by the Constitution of the country, their first thought is how they shall so discharge their duties that they may keep possession of them for the longest possible period. That, at all events, is the measure which he metes out to the House of Lords, and



I conclude that it is the ground upon which his own mind moves.

AN ARROGANT DICTATOR.

For myself I repudiate utterly any such motives as a ground for public conduct. I believe that such motives belong to a degraded order of public morality, and that if they guide any large number of our countrymen the fall of our Constitution will be at hand. If the House of Lords now gives way on account of threats of that kind, if it accepts the doctrine that it is to subscribe to any proposition of the House of Commons if it is recommended by some circulating Minister, who goes round the railway stations to denounce them—if the Lords accept that view of their position and their functions in the State, their future condition will be such as to gratify the deepest hatred of their enemies, and to fill with grief all who value their order and its traditions. They will be the possessors of a merely empty power and the objects of undisguised contempt. But I cannot admit that it is from motives of the kind the Prime Minister imputes to them that the action of the House of Lords will follow. They are in possession by the constitution of their country, not at any request or desire of their own, of functions which bring to them much conflict, much opprobrium, no profit or advantage in the way of social condition. They are in possession of these powers, and they exercise them, and value them only in so far as such powers enable them to contribute to the welfare of the country. If they exercise their powers in that sense they may, indeed, be marks of honour, such as any subject of the Queen may value; but if they exercise them in a spirit of timidity and terror, only considering, like some valetudinarian, how, by abstinence from all exertion, they may for the longest prolong the feeble and flickering flame of their life—if that is the spirit in which

they regard them—if they accept them as a screen to the undisputed, uncontrolled action of an arrogant dictator—if they do that, those powers, instead of being a mark of honour, will be an emblem and a brand of disgrace. My belief is that they will consent to exercise powers of that kind only on the condition of absolute independence of every other power except that of the people of this country. That I believe to be their conception of their duty—a conception which would be the duty of every honest Englishman who was placed in their position ; and in that conception I believe they will be sustained by all classes of their countrymen in all portions of the country.

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*THE HOUSE OF LORDS AND THE  
FRANCHISE BILL.*

(AT KELSO, OCTOBER 12, 1884.)

I had hoped that on this occasion I might have been able to talk to you on something else besides the franchise, for I confess that the subject is one that is beginning to weary me, and it is impossible not to feel that it is obscuring other subjects of much greater importance, that it is withdrawing our eyes from dangers which menace the Empire on every side. Even since I have been in the room there has been put into my hands an item of news calculated to cause us grave reflection as to the condition in which our country stands, and the peril to which its honour is exposed. I saw a telegram to the effect—I know not whether it is true—that in default of Imperial assistance the Canadian Government has offered to the Cape Government to render it some aid in this its extremity. If there should be any truth in such a piece of intelligence it is one of the gravest reflections on the

misconduct of the English Government that was ever furnished by the goodwill—the happy goodwill—that exists between one colony and another. But the course of our observations must be dictated to a great extent by the course which Her Majesty's Government choose to pursue. We have had within the last week three members of the Government speak exclusively upon this franchise question, as though there were no other matter of interest in the world, entirely ignoring all the accusations which their policy has to meet, and all the mistakes it is their duty to explain, and we must perforce follow them in the argument which they have laid before the country. We are bound to do so the more because they seem to show themselves absolutely blind to the facts that lie before them. They repeat again and again the old fallacies, the old misrepresentations, as if no refutation of them had ever been laid before the world.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT.

The latest, perhaps the least important, of these speeches has the peculiarity—I mean the speech of Sir William Harcourt—that it is almost entirely occupied with the merits of the humble person who addresses you. I think that in selecting the range and scope for his eloquence Sir William Harcourt must have been haunted by some of his old memories of the bar, and must have remembered the time when it was his duty to abuse the plaintiff or the plaintiff's attorney. But as you know, the plaintiff's attorney is only abused when there is no case. He makes a great number of quotations from my speeches, and he says that he has read over some speeches that I made 17 years ago. Well, there he has the advantage of me, for I have not read them, and he also says that he has read over an article which he declares was written by me. Whether the sentences which he quotes were written by me it is impossible for me at this distance of time, and at

this distance from all opportunity of reference, to say, but I will only say with respect to those quotations that unless they are more accurate than those which he has made from speeches and writings of this present year they are not of much value for any purpose whatever, for I think, dealing merely with the matters of the present year, he has hardly—full though his speeches are of quotations—made a single quotation which is not, by the omission of the context, or by the omission of certain words, utterly misleading. As to the meaning of the passage quoted I will only give one or two instances. For instance, he states that I on a certain occasion declared that the House of Lords had rejected the Bill. I was discussing the general powers of the House of Lords, and what was to be done in case the Lords did reject the Bill. The Prime Minister made the same mistake two days afterwards. I corrected it publicly in the House of Lords, and yet Sir William Harcourt after that correction again asserts that I stated that the Bill was rejected. Again, he accuses me of having said that the present state of things in Egypt was charming, and that I rejoiced over the misfortunes of my country, whereas what I did say was that if I were speaking as a mere partisan I might say that the state of things was charming, but that I looked on such language as ghastly and horrible. So that he actually accused me of having used language which, as I was using it, I said I considered was ghastly. Surely those two specimens are sufficient. Do not accept any quotations which you may see from my speech, or from those of his other opponents, in the speeches of Sir William Harcourt, without first taking the trouble to refer to see whether they are accurate.

“THE SATURDAY REVILER.”

But if Sir William Harcourt is going into what I may call the archæology of opinion—if he is going to refer to opinions that were expressed a long time back, I think he will have to cast the beam out of his own eye before he affects to cure the mote in other people's. He speaks of Mr. Bright with something like adulation; but I can remember when articles which were attributed to him on as good authority as that on which anything is attributed to me—I can remember when articles of such vituperation were levelled against Mr. Bright and against the reform which he preached that Mr. Bright named his adversary the “Saturday Reviler,” the articles having appeared in the *Saturday Review*. It is now this “Saturday Reviler” who is embracing Mr. Bright, who has the singular courage to revert to opinions expressed in past years, and to try to extract from them the material for political controversy. But, after all, why do not I take the greatest case? Does not Sir William Harcourt sail under a leader who has navigated every zone of political opinion, who, starting from the extremest Toryism, finds himself in the extremest Radicalism, and has taken up and advanced every intermediate opinion in turn? But the truth is that such quotations are of very little value for political controversy, and I take leave to say that by forcing the discussion down to this personal level he has degraded the great argument about which we are contending. He says he treats the controversy as one mainly affecting a great cause, and he chooses to attribute to me powers that are absolutely absurd. He says “It was by Lord Salisbury's personal influence that he forced or rather persuaded the majority of the House of Lords to reject the Franchise Bill. I firmly believe that the majority, if they had not been put under pressure,



would gladly and willingly have passed that Bill," and he goes on to call me the "arrogant dictator of that House." Now he is comparing my position—of which I am very unworthy—with that which Mr. Gladstone occupies in the House of Commons. But Mr. Gladstone is the dictator because he holds the political life of all or the greater part of his following in the hollow of his hand. By a dissolution he could terminate the present tenure of their seats and by the Caucus he could ensure that they shall not as Liberal members go back to Parliament again. They are absolutely at his disposal. If they value their Parliamentary life, they must vote as he bids them to vote. But, compare that position with mine. I have absolutely no power whatever over those who are kind enough to act with me. They are as completely independent as it is possible for men to be. I have no power whatever but what I may obtain by argument, by the goodness of my argument, and the soundness of my case, and it is ridiculous and grotesque to pretend that any influence I could have could impose my opinion upon the Peers. Therefore that pretence is wanting for the personal character which he has chosen to give to this discussion. I will not speak of other amenities. He calls me an "old woman," I think; but if he thinks I have this power over the Peers he must think I am not only an old woman but a witch. Then he goes on to say I am exactly like Laud, that I am exactly like Lord Strafford, that I am very like Charles I., and some time ago he said I was exactly like Lord North, so that I must congratulate myself on the possession of a very many-sided character when I think that I am like all those celebrated persons. But I would venture to remind him that Strafford, when he was in Ireland, had a great weakness for taking away the property of Irish landlords, and I do not know whether that is not rather more like the character of the Government which is in office



than it is like me. I also remember that the other day when the Government wanted to lock up somebody or other in Ireland, and they could find no statute in English legislation that would enable them to do it, they were obliged to have recourse to some very despotic statute that was passed by the Earl of Strafford.

A ROYSTERING BLADE.

However, Sir William Harcourt is quite safe from retaliation. I shall not compare him to any eminent statesman in the past. I shall not attribute to him overwhelming influence over any assembly or any man whatever. I fancy that if we spoke in the language of the times to which he refers we should call him a roystering blade, the sort of man whose threats were very formidable, but whose performances were not likely to give anybody very much trouble. He ends by saying, in the first place, that I am rich, which is a crime to which very few landowners can plead in the present times, and then that I am a miser. I cannot find a comparison for that kind of controversy. It seems to me very much like what is going on at the present moment on the other side of the Atlantic. There the whole population are settling which of the two parties shall govern the United States for the next four years by examining into the minutest scandals of the private lives of Mr. Blaine and Governor Cleveland. I think Sir William Harcourt is preparing himself to adopt the most pronounced oratorical methods of the most advanced society. It is from it that I should find an analogy for his speeches.

LORD HARTINGTON.

Now, to turn from him, as I do, to speeches more to the purpose, to Lord Hartington, and, as your noble chairman calls him, his Nemesis—Mr. Chamberlain. The first thing

I have to observe about those speeches is that they go on the idea that there is some bargain which one of them speaking at Hanley, and the other speaking at Manchester, can make with the House of Lords. I do not know that anybody is in the position to answer for what the House of Lords may choose to do, and I am quite certain that nobody can make a bargain on their behalf. Whatever Her Majesty's Government may do I am sure it will receive the most candid consideration on the part of the House of Lords. But allow me to remind you what the precise contention of the House of Lords is. It is that no Franchise Bill of this magnitude can be equitable or safe unless it is accompanied by a fair Redistribution Bill, and that one of those measures must not come into operative legal effect without the other. That I take to be the contention of the House of Lords. I do not think the House of Lords will recede from it, and I am quite sure that they ought not to do so. That is the contention of the House of Lords, not less, but also not more. I have seen a great many things attributed to the House of Lords with which they have nothing to do. They have been accused of urging a dissolution, of forcing a dissolution; they have been accused of desiring that this or that scheme of redistribution should be accepted. What the House of Lords may wish to do on these two points we cannot know, for they have not spoken. You must not confuse the language of individual members of the House of Lords with the language of the House of Lords itself. We have all of us a perfect right, like other subjects of the Queen, to express our opinions on this question, and we shall do it freely and without restraint, but it would be as foolish to assume that that was the action of the House of Lords as to assume that when Mr. Gladstone insults the House of Lords it is the action of the House of Commons. Lord Hartington's speech undoubtedly deserves

recognition from us, in that it was conceived and uttered in a tone of much greater conciliation than any we have heard from any of his colleagues. I do not think he made any very definite or intelligible proposal; at all events he made no proposal that, so far as I can see, would bring the controversy to a close, but I am bound to express my belief that if we had only Lord Hartington to deal with we should either never have got into this controversy, or we should be able to bring it to a speedy and friendly settlement.

“THE NEMESIS.”

But there is always the Nemesis. Whenever Lord Hartington speaks Mr. Chamberlain takes care to engage one or two days afterwards in which he carefully undoes all the good that Lord Hartington may have done. I am surprised that Lord Hartington is not tired of the process. I remember two years ago, when Lord Hartington said it would be madness to give greater local, more local self-liberty to the Irish unless they would give some pledge of their loyalty to the Queen. Mr. Chamberlain immediately followed by saying that the only possible way of bringing the Irish to peace was to give them local liberty, without mentioning any kind of condition whatever. Last year, you will remember, Lord Hartington expended a great deal of eloquence in contending that you ought not to bring in a Franchise Bill that did not include Ireland. He had a melancholy presentiment of his approaching fate; for he said, “You should not be at all surprised if I should be taking the other side in this question in the spring,” and so of course it happened. He was followed by the fierce denunciations of Mr. Chamberlain, and in the Cabinet Mr. Chamberlain’s will has ever prevailed, and so it is now. Mr. Chamberlain followed his more conciliatory tone by language more violent and subversive against the institutions of the country than any Minister

has yet employed. Lord Hartington's relations to the Government seem to me to resemble very much what we have seen of an Italian sermon. I do not know whether you know the mode in which an Italian sermon is conducted. A student is put up at one end of the church, and he maintains the side of the devil, and argues for it as best he can. Of course he argues very feebly. As soon as he has done, the preacher gets up and demolishes the arguments of the student with great triumph, and sends him away discomfited. That is very much the way the Government appear to deal with their opponents. They first set up Lord Hartington to argue a case which they look upon as utterly hopeless; which he does in mild and gentle language, in a very despondent and somewhat sleepy manner, and when he has done down comes the fierce denunciation of Mr. Chamberlain, in order, by overthrowing him, to show how utterly the Ministers trample upon the view which he favours. The only suggestion which seemed to fall from Lord Hartington was wrapped up in "perhapses" and "ifs," and depended on other contingencies, as though it came from a man who was pretty sure he was going to be disavowed. The only suggestion he made was that the Government should introduce the Franchise Bill—a fair Franchise Bill—and then the House of Lords should be so charmed with it, that they would forthwith pass it without requiring to know more about the fate of the Redistribution Bill. That is a very amiable picture, but it hardly seems to me like business. A Bill is a very interesting study, but until it has passed the House into which it is introduced it is nothing but an interesting study, for it has no value whatever. We have heard a good deal about blank cheques; but this is not a case of a blank cheque. We are asked to give the Government a blank cheque, and in exchange for it they will give us a cheque without a signature. Supposing, for instance, you were at market, and had a

transaction with a gentleman, a stranger, who said, "You must show your confidence in me. You must not ask me to pay you; it is a scandalous thing to ask me to pay you." "I cannot," you may argue, "listen to such a contention for a moment, and I decline to conclude the transaction." He will say then, "I am an equitable man; we will have a compromise; I will draw a cheque, I will put in writing the date, and I will fill it up with exactly the proper figures; but I will not sign it, and I will give it to you." That is exactly the proposal which Lord Hartington seems to think will be satisfactory to the House of Lords. I confess I do not exactly share his anticipation. I think we shall want something more than that. I think that when this fair and equitable Redistribution Bill has been introduced we shall ask that the natural result shall follow—that that fair and equitable Bill shall be also passed, and when it is passed and sent up to the House of Lords I have no doubt there will be no difficulty whatever in disposing of both Bills to the satisfaction of the country.

NO DIFFICULTY ABOUT JUMPING OVER THE HOTEL.

There seems likely to arise some little hitch in the proposals which the Government make as they stand at present before us. If I understand Lord Hartington rightly, this Bill is already in existence. I do not know whether it is the Bill which has recently appeared in the *Standard*. Probably that is not the Bill of the Cabinet—only the Bill of the Committee which guides the Cabinet. It is a Bill, I may say, in passing, which bears upon it a very strong impress of that party manœuvring which we have such great cause to dread in the construction of a Redistribution Bill by any Government which is not properly checked and supervised. It is a Bill which will have the effect, as I read it, of utterly effacing those rural



populations which suffer too much disadvantage under the present system, and are not represented at all in comparison with their numbers. But whatever the Bill may be, my impression is, that if the Minister goes into the House of Commons and says to them, "We have got a Redistribution Bill; it is already in my pocket, but I shall not show it to you until the Franchise Bill is passed; and when the Franchise Bill is passed, the House of Lords, who are rather more difficult than you to deal with, may have a look at the Bill; but you shall not see it till you have passed the Franchise Bill"—my impression is that, unless the House of Commons is very much changed since I had the honour of personal acquaintance with it, that ingenious strategy will not succeed. If it does succeed, I can only say that the House of Commons is more utterly subservient and more degraded by the action of the caucus than I could possibly have imagined. But there are some consequences of this offer of Lord Hartington's that I wish you just to consider. It seems to me that it disposes of the argument on which the Government have hitherto based their conduct. They tell us that it was impossible to pass Redistribution and Franchise Bills in the same year. I suppose that if they are to introduce a Redistribution Bill they mean to pass it; otherwise they would be guilty of dishonesty; and therefore it appears that after all there is no such impossibility in passing the Franchise Bill and a Redistribution Bill, as they were good enough to tell us. You remember that in the country—I forget where it was—Mr. Gladstone said that if the Lords said they would pass the Franchise Bill, but assigned to it a condition which was quite impossible, he would compare their conduct to that of a man who offered to give a large sum of money, but only on condition that somebody should jump over the hotel under which he was standing; and now it appears that there is no such difficulty about jumping over



the hotel, and that when they are properly pressed the Government find no difficulty in bringing forward a Redistribution Bill in the same year as the Franchise Bill, and in passing it. The only answer they can give—and this is a matter which well merits your attention—is, “We want the passage of the Franchise Bill as a means of coercing, not only the House of Lords, but also the House of Commons, into passing such a Redistribution Bill as we like.” Always remember the grounds of conduct which in an imprudent moment Lord Hartington let out at Manchester. “We know that the passing of any real, rational, and thorough Reform Bill is impossible unless Parliament and parties of all sides are acting under some pressure or compulsion.” Now that points to the danger of which the chairman so wisely warned you. There is a constant tendency to exalt the power of the Minister and to bring the Houses of the Legislature under pressure or compulsion. That is a tendency which it is your business as constituents to resist to the utmost of your power; that is the real, that will be the real cause, if it ever happens, of the power slipping out of your hands and being absorbed by some machinery or Minister elsewhere. This is really a matter of very much more importance than the Franchise Bill. If the Government succeed in the effort that they are making they will effect a very important change in the Constitution of this country, not only by widening the basis of the Constitution in the House of Commons, to which I have no objection, but they will practically efface and destroy for all effective purposes the power of the House of Lords.

A VITAL QUESTION FOR OUR LIBERTIES.

Mr. Gladstone, in the course of his journey in Scotland, two or three times repeated the idea that the House of Lords had no business to resist any action of the House of

Commons. Sir William Harcourt renewed that statement. He said that it is for the House of Commons and not for the House of Lords to decide upon the franchise and redistribution. He denounced with great vigour, and perfectly rightly, any claim on our part to dictate the time when the Queen shall dissolve Parliament. We have not the power of such dictation, but, to use his own language, it is as rash, as violent, and as unconstitutional to maintain that any measure that passes the House of Commons can rightly become law without the full assent of the House of Lords. He has no precedent for such a thing. The only precedent which he can state—the precedent of the time of the great Reform Bill—he states, I think, in a manner not perfectly ingenuous. He tells us that the then Government, merely basing their action on the votes of the House of Commons, overawed the House of Lords; but why did the House of Lords yield? A dissolution had taken place after the Bill had been introduced—a dissolution following on the vote of the House of Commons, a dissolution overwhelming in its character and indicating distinctly what the nation desired. The House of Lords were quite right to yield—I wish they had yielded sooner—the moment the voice of the nation was clearly pronounced. It is only on that condition, that the nation shall be supreme, that the various parts of our body politic can pull harmoniously together; but it is a very different thing to say that the nation is supreme and to say that the House of Commons, elected on other issues—elected four or five years ago—and dominated by a powerful Minister, under the strong influence of the Caucus, that that House, without check and without control, shall be supreme, not only in the ordinary matters of legislation, but shall be supreme in deciding who are the people that shall elect and in what constituencies they shall elect the House of Commons for the

future. That is really a vital question for our liberties. We are threatened, in no veiled language, by those Ministers if we pursue the course which duty marks out to us. Mr. Chamberlain says:—"I think those gentlemen (referring to the House of Lords) presume on your love of order and your hatred of violence. These are, no doubt, characteristics of the English people; but unless this generation has lost other qualities which have made the name of Englishmen respected and honoured throughout the world they will show courage and resolution." If these words have any meaning they say to the English people that if they still possess the courage and resolution of their race they will part with that love of order and that hatred of violence which they have hitherto displayed. I only hope that if Mr. Chamberlain incites the people to riot he will head the riot himself. I hope that if he is going, according to his threat, to march on London from Birmingham, we may see him at the head of the advancing column. My impression is that those who will have to receive him will be able to give a very good account of him, and that Mr. Chamberlain will return from his adventure with a broken head if with nothing worse. Then Sir William Harcourt in the same way threatens us that, as our fathers, he says, went within twenty-four hours of revolution, so we shall have revolution actually upon us. Well, Sir William Harcourt has great opportunity of executing the threats which he utters, because he is head of the police. Last summer he employed the police in order to make a procession pass through London, and he brought it, under their guidance and under their protection, up to the very gates of the Houses of Lords and Commons. Though such a proceeding was a distinct infraction of the orders of both Houses, and was contrary to the spirit, if not the letter, of an Act of Parliament, it was done under the authority and by the protection of the police. We may

presume, therefore, that if this resolution which Sir William Harcourt threatens us with is really begun, the same powerful protection will be accorded to its operations.

THE HOUSE OF LORDS BLEEDING TO DEATH.

But I do not regard these threats as of any value whatever for us. They have nothing to do with the duty which lies before the House of Lords. If it is indeed possible for the Ministers of the Crown to stir up the people to disorder—and they have done their best—if that is indeed possible, we shall regret very much the condition of the country in which such things can be done, but they cannot alter by one iota the duty which the House of Lords owes to the country, or the manner in which it is right for them to fulfil the functions which, by no wish of their own, have been imposed upon them. You know that there has been a talk of having only a single Chamber, and abolishing the House of Lords. I do not think that that has come within the range of practical politics. I see no inclination on the part of the English people to submit to the despotism of a single Chamber; but I do not regard that as by any means the greatest danger to which we are exposed. I shall deeply deplore it, but I should deplore it less than a course of events which, without abolishing the House of Lords, reduced them to inactivity and impotence, and left them as a mere screen and mask for any enterprise that the Minister might like to undertake. If the House of Lords were abolished, if you can imagine such a thing, the people of England would say to themselves, "This is a tremendous event; our constitution is an entirely new one; we are at the mercy of the House of Commons; we must devise new securities to prevent the power of those gentlemen whom we elect for seven years from being abused." But if any such change takes place, if the House of Lords—if I may so express it—bleeds to death, if its

power is allowed to be repudiated and defeated and silently to fade away, the attention of English people will not be drawn to the precarious position in which their liberties are placed; they will not see that the despotism of a single Chamber, of a single Minister, has taken the place of the old constitution of the Crown, Lords, and Commons. Therefore I regard any issue of that kind as far more dangerous than any abolition of the second Chamber, deeply and profoundly as I should deplore such an issue.

“THAT MONSTROUS CONCENTRATION OF POWER.”

Remember that the dangers which affect you in the present are very rarely the dangers by which you were threatened in the past. There is a celebrated simile in one of the Greek orators, Demosthenes, in which he is reproaching the Athenian people that they were like unskilful pugilists, who, when a blow had been delivered in one place, immediately lifted up their hands to protect that place and never thought that the next blow would be delivered somewhere else. That is really the condition of our modern society. It is idle to cast our eyes back to the constitutional struggles of a past time, to imagine that things which threatened our liberties in the seventeenth century are likely to threaten our liberties to-day. It is mere rubbish to talk of Laud and Strafford. You may as well attempt to frighten the British people with ogres and brownies; you might as well tell them it was their duty to construct nets to catch the ichthyosaurus. Dangers of a totally different kind threaten you now. It is from no aspiring priest, it is from no despotic monarch, that your liberties run any risk at the present time, and do not imagine that any more than any other human blessing they are exempt from danger, or that they do not require constant vigilance and protection. The danger at the present



time—we see it in operation in America—is that your politics may, as they express it, be worked by the machine; that the power of the caucus, of the wirepuller, of the organization, may become so great, that individual opinion shall find no voice for expression, and that those who are in possession of the electoral machine will practically be in possession of supreme power in this country. And you have not the protection—never forget it—you have not the protection which the Americans possess. With them no law can be altered, no fundamental law of their country can be altered, without a direct reference to the opinion of the people, without obtaining a three-fourths majority in favour of the alteration. It is not so with us. Everything is theoretically in the hands of Parliament, and if Parliament is whittled down so that nothing remains of it but the House of Commons, everything will be at the mercy of the majority of that House, and if the majority in the House of Commons is really to have its Parliamentary life at the mercy of the Minister of the day and the caucus which he commands, everything will be in the hands of the Minister of the day—all power, executive as well as legislative. That is the real danger—a danger which should make you pause before you are accomplices in any way in weakening the power, already much reduced, of the second chamber, which is the only control left upon an aspiring and engrossing Minister. Nowhere in modern times has such a constitution as they wish to impose upon you prevailed. Nowhere has a single chamber, without check and without control, disposed of legislative and executive power. That is not the constitution under which our empire has grown and our prosperity increased—that is not the constitution which it is our business to protect. Against the imposition of that monstrous concentration of power in the hands of a single political clique, we at least, so long as strength and authority are



given to us, will struggle to the end to the utmost of our power.

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*ONE-MAN POWER.*

(AT DUMFRIES, OCTOBER 22, 1884.)

In rising to thank Lord Galloway, the Conservative Associations, and you, for the kind reception which has been accorded to me, I cannot, in the first instance, forbear from noting the melancholy fact that if I had addressed you here from this platform a year ago, it is probable that the chair would have been occupied by another person. I cannot welcome my noble friend the Duke of Buccleuch to his new honours and the vast position of influence which they give him without recalling the memory of that splendid Scotchman and patriot who has passed away. He passed a life far longer in that position than an ordinary life. In the discharge, in the sedulous and unfailing discharge, of the highest duties of a subject, he never permitted the privileges and enjoyment which his position gave him to induce him for a moment to forget the obligations under which he lay towards his fellow subjects, or the duties which his position imposed upon him. He passed a life of unflagging exertion in the discharge of social duties of no common importance, and he leaves behind him a memory of sagacity, of patriotism, of public spirit, of equable and calm judgment, which no Scotchman within our experience has surpassed or equalled.

*A POLICY OF PLASTERING OVER DIFFICULTIES.*

Gentlemen, I approach the task of addressing you to-night with the somewhat consoling feeling that we are standing on the verge of the close of this autumn campaign. It has been

one of considerable exertion, not only for the speakers but for the hearers, and my impression is that when it passes into history those who have passed through it will dismiss it with the hope that the like of it may never occur again. But from a political point of view, I cannot say that it has left upon my mind a shade of regret for the course which the House of Lords and the Conservative party have thought it their duty to take. It appears to me that it has left the Conservative party more united than ever it was before, and it has given to the country an opportunity of discussing questions deeply affecting the constitutional working of our Government—an opportunity of hearing both sides of the question, and of forming their deliberate judgment thereupon. From all I see and all I hear, I do not believe that that judgment is unfavourable to the existing Constitution of the country. Some people on the other side are constantly telling us that we have not pursued the right course for the benefit of the Tory party. I am always struck with the singular perception which our adversaries have of that which the Tory party in its own interest ought to do, and they have not been tired of impressing upon us that we have made a great mistake in not attacking them in their own way—that we have drawn attention to matters which we had better not have noticed, and that we have committed the great impolicy of bringing, in the first place, the question of the House of Lords before the country; and in the second place, that we have distracted the minds of the people of this country from the other blunders of the Government. Now, I accept with thankfulness that admission on the part of our opponents that there are considerable blunders of the Government to notice, but I do not in the least admit the error which they impute to us, because the imputation of that error rests upon the assumption that the people of this country must be treated rather like lunatics, and that it is dangerous to mention any

matter in their hearing lest it should set up a perilous and destructive line of thought. I do not believe in the policy of plastering over difficulties and trying to avoid dangers by reticence. The only chance we have in this country is fair, free, open discussion ; and if I am told that we have brought before the attention of the country subjects which but for us would not have been brought before them, I say all the better. The sooner that they discuss them the better they will be able to judge upon them. The only thing we have to fear is a hasty, uninformed judgment, and the longer they are able to discuss them, the more thoroughly these questions are agitated in their view, with the more perfect confidence may we assure ourselves of the sound judgment that will ultimately be arrived at.

#### THE PARLIAMENTARY DRENCHING SPOON.

Now, as we approach the close of this campaign, let us try to improve our experience, let us try to trace what are the tendencies, what the prospects which the progress and character of this agitation have disclosed before us. I think, if you will examine all that is new in the character of this agitation, you will find that the indications point in one particular direction. You will find that there is a tendency, beyond anything that our fathers have experienced before, to give the power to the Ministry of the day and especially to the Prime Minister who is at at their head ; and in all the arguments that have been urged and the new doctrine that have been impressed upon us that is the tendency, that is the object to which our opponents seem to direct their efforts, and in my judgment that is the course of events which it most concerns the people of this country to prevent. Now, if you will look at the state of this controversy, which has been thrashed out before you during the last three months, you will see that we stand at

this point. The Government have summoned an early session. They want to pass, so they tell us, the Franchise Bill and a Redistribution Bill. According to all former precedent, according to the ordinary practice of Parliament, what they would do would be to introduce those two Bills together, and to pass them through as quickly as they can. They have an unusually long session in which to do it, because they have begun six weeks earlier than the ordinary session, and therefore it is presumable that even within the time they have before next August they would be able, if they try, to accomplish this object. But they are not limited to next August. There is nothing which it is more important to remember, when they tell you they have no time to pass these Bills, that the amount of time they will take is absolutely a matter at their own discretion. They can continue the session; they have no need to prorogue Parliament, for they can continue it as long as they like; and, therefore, if they do not get time enough to pass these two Bills which they profess their desire to pass, and which they have called us at this early period for passing, it must be entirely their own decision or their own fault. Well, you may ask me, Why do not the Government take advantage of this? Why did they not introduce these two Bills at once and pass them together? They tell us they cannot pass these Bills unless they can put the Houses of Parliament under compulsion—I am not using my own words, that was precisely the word used by Lord Hartington—unless they could put the Houses of Parliament under compulsion they say that they will not be able to pass these two Bills. I need not tell you that this is an entirely new pretension in our constitutional history. Never before has a Minister of the Crown assumed to have the right to exercise compulsion upon the free decision of the two Houses of Parliament. They are repeatedly trying to impress upon you that this a

conflict with the House of Lords, but this idea of compulsion points to the House of Commons, because it would be just as easy to agitate against the House of Lords upon the question of redistribution as upon the question of franchise. Therefore, it is the House of Commons which they aim at when they say that they must be armed with a power of compulsion which they do not now possess—that is to say, they must be able to say to the House of Commons, “Unless you pass this Bill which we present to you, this Redistribution Bill, you will have to submit to the franchise without redistribution, which we know you will regard as a horrible alternative.” Well, I said just now that the reticence principle rather made you think they were treating the people of England as lunatics, but this idea makes me think they are treating the people of England as if they were babies in arms. Those who have domestic experience may know that the way of making a baby take medicine is to pinch its nose and to insert a drenching-spoon into its mouth, and in that way the baby is made to take the medicine to which it would otherwise object. That is precisely the process Her Majesty’s Government propose to apply to the House of Commons. They propose, by means of this Parliamentary drenching-spoon, to force down the throats of the House of Commons the medicine which they know very well if the House of Commons had the opportunity of unbiassed judgment it would decline to accept.

JERRYMANDERING.

I think we have in some of the revelations that have recently been made an explanation why the ordinary mode of taking medicine is to be abandoned, and why the drenching-spoon is to be resorted to. I dare say you have read the clear, forcible, and vigorous exposition of the defects of the Redistribution Bill which appeared in the

*Standard* from the mouth of Lord Randolph Churchill. I need not repeat his demonstration, I should only spoil it by doing so; but it seems to me substantially just and fair. There is one feature of it which I cannot forbear to notice. About ten days ago Lord Hartington, speaking at Rawtenstall, spoke to us with pitying contempt of our unworthy desire to cast up how many we should gain or how many we should lose by any Redistribution Bill. Well, it seemed to me at the time a very dignified appeal, and I was much struck that a day or two afterwards appeared this Bill which had been prepared by a committee of the Cabinet. From that it appeared that somewhat strange things had been done in Lord Hartington's own county. A certain town called Accrington has 60,000 inhabitants, and, as you know, according to strict numerical calculations, 54,000 inhabitants is enough to qualify for a member, but the town of Accrington was not to have a member. And why? Because it was in Lord Hartington's county, and because the urban voters in the town of Accrington, who vote for Lord Hartington, would be made county voters instead of urban voters by that arrangement. Well, when that appeared I thought there was something exquisitely humorous in Lord Hartington's deprecation of our unworthy conduct in casting up the amount of seats we should gain or lose. I do not for a moment accuse Lord Hartington of being conscious of what his friends were doing, but no doubt the moment he saw that scheme appear in the *Standard* he took a cab and dashed down to the office and insisted that Accrington should have a member. The point which I have ventured to bring before you is that all these proceedings go in the direction that I have indicated to you. It is effected by that tendency to give excessive power to the Ministry which I ventured to signalize to you as the great danger of our day. The Ministry recommend for their own reasons and purposes



some scheme to the House of Commons. They are afraid that the House of Commons will not, according to the ordinary practice, pass it, and they require, for the first time in our history, powers of compulsion. They require to be able to put the House of Commons under a penalty, unless it will pass a redistribution scheme which suits their purpose. If they were not actuated by party motives it would involve the most intolerable annoyance, for it would involve the assumption that they are capable of dictating to the Houses of Parliament that which the Houses of Parliament ought to accept, and that their judgment is superior to any that the Houses of Parliament can exercise.

#### DEMANDING A POLL.

Take another point. Mr. Chamberlain has been good enough to say, with singular reiteration, that this is a contest between the House of Lords and the people, and he goes into a great many heroics about the duty of some people to resist this intolerable aristocratic tyranny. My impression is, if there is any aristocratic tyranny, a very small portion of this free people would know how to get rid of it at once ; but the truth is that there is no conflict whatever between the House of Peers and the people. What the House of Lords desire to know is what the people think. They desire to know it in the authorized and regular way. They wish to know it by the counting of opinions at the polls. That is the only way in which it can be really ascertained. I have no doubt that Mr. Chamberlain would wish us to believe that the hired ruffians who were sent to break into Aston Hall the other day represented the people ; but we decline to accept that species of indication of popular opinion. As for the demonstrations, I can say two things of them. In the first place, one side or the other, I do not believe they have affected two per cent. of the population ; and, in the second place, as far as any fair return

of them will give an indication, it seems to me that opinion is as much in the Conservative as in the Radical direction. But if they dispute our view, the simple resource—a resource of which they are marvellously afraid—is to consult the people. They tell us they are delighted with this agitation, and that the whole public opinion is on their side. My impression is that if they were so delighted they would not be so mortally afraid of the possibility of an appeal to it. You know, those who can remember elections as they were some ten or eleven years ago, that the form was that first a show of hands was taken, and if anybody objected to the show of hands and demanded a poll, then a poll was taken; but I never heard anybody say that because you objected to a show of hands, and demanded a poll, therefore you were repudiating the authority of the constituency. The House of Lords is in that position. It does not think that the show of hands is any clear indication that the people have decided against the course which they have pursued, and they demand a poll; and if a poll is not granted to them now they have no wish, according to the common phrase, to force a dissolution. A dissolution will come soon enough. According to the constitutional doctrine laid down by Mr. Gladstone himself, there must be a dissolution within fifteen or sixteen months, and the House of Lords are perfectly content to wait for that time. They have no wish to force a dissolution, but they will not accept a show of hands decided by not an impartial authority; and they insist that this great issue can only be decided by the great national poll.

#### Dictatorship.

But now the point I want you to observe is the doctrine that is held on the other side upon this subject. We are told that it is an intolerable thing that the House of

Lords should have the power to force a dissolution. As I have said to you, the House of Lords has never pretended to do anything of the kind. All it has pretended to do is to put by a certain question until a dissolution can be had. But who is to have this power of dissolution? is it the the Crown? No. Mr. Gladstone was very careful in his last speech to point out that the Crown in his view meant nothing but the decision of the Prime Minister. I do not agree with him. I do not admit that to be constitutional law. In my view, whatever else is surrendered to the discretion of the Prime Minister, this question of dissolution never can be disconnected from the initiative and the will of the Crown. And I will tell you why. A dissolution is the only appeal the people have against a Prime Minister who is not acting according to their wish. That the Prime Minister should have a right of advising an appeal to the people I do not deny for a moment, but I do deny that he has a right to interpose his will and say—The people may storm, and object; they may think that my course is wrong, but so long as I can control the majority in the House of Commons, elected under my auspices, controlled by my machinery, so long I will not permit an appeal to be made to the people against myself. That does not seem to me to be true constitutional law. But whether it is true or not, what I wish to point out to you is the tendency of all these new doctrines that are started now to centre all power into the hands of the Prime Minister alone. Mr. Chamberlain insists that the majority shall have all power, and that the minority shall have no rights, and he says if the majority abuse that power they will soon become a minority. Aye, but there are seven long years to run before the majority become a minority. There are seven long years to run before any abuse of power can be punished, and during that time blows may be dealt against the institutions of the coun-

try which it will be impossible afterwards to repair. In his zeal to control the power of the people against the House of Lords, Mr. Chamberlain has introduced a new way of expressing the opinion of the people. But, as you know, or at least as his friends have thought, the best way to express the opinions of the people is by attacking a meeting at which so moderate and careful a statesman as Sir Stafford Northcote was to express his opinions—by dint of bludgeons and chair backs to make the expression of opinion impossible. Mr. Chamberlain has been pleased to say that this riot at Birmingham was due to some observations which I made. The observations which I made were that if he incited to a riot, I hoped that he would head the riot, when I was pretty confident that his head would get broken. If Mr. Chamberlain means to say that a Minister of the Crown who incites to riot ought not to have his head broken I differ from Mr. Chamberlain. To incite to disorder is a grave offence on the part of anybody; but on the part of a Cabinet Minister, on the part of one of those who are charged with the peace and order of the vast industrial communities in which we live, it is one of the greatest offences that a man could commit. But I do not wish to argue the point with Mr. Chamberlain if he thinks that the penalty of having his head broken for such an offence is too severe. For the sake of argument, I am willing to put the question aside. Let us leave Mr. Chamberlain's head alone, and assume that some milder chastisement would be appropriate to the supposed offence. What I want to point out to you is that they all fall into the same groove, which I have already pointed out to you as the groove in which Liberal opinion is fitting itself. It all implies that despotic imposition of the opinion of the majority which happens to be Liberal upon their opponents, and the use of any means, no matter how repulsive or atrocious, which may seem likely to compass the results at which he aims.

In this country of Scotland, you have had some people who have even improved upon Mr. Chamberlain's lessons. Sir George Campbell, who in his time was charged with the government of sixty-four millions of people, and would have disposed of anybody who had incited to disorder, with extreme rapidity, is reported to have said, "I entreat you now to be content with lawful proceedings"—these were his words—"but if the House of Lords does not pass the Franchise Bill, why then we will take stronger measures." That is to say, stronger measures than lawful proceedings. That is the kind of result which Liberal doctrine, as preached by Mr. Chamberlain, is producing in this country.

#### THE ONE-MAN POWER.

Now, there are other indications of the same tendency—a tendency against which I think all good citizens should watch; and there are indications which show at once what danger attends this one-man power. In 1881, as you are aware, there were a series of actions, terminating in an action on Majuba Hill, and there were a series of negotiations, terminating in a convention which the Boers have not observed, and which the English Ministry again and again has consented to revise. Well, what was our constitutional majority doing during that time? Why was it the House of Commons did not interpose to stop proceedings so much at variance with all the traditions of this country? The House of Commons was blameless in the matter. Again and again Sir Michael Hicks-Beach urged upon the Government that some opportunity should be given of discussing the affairs of the Transvaal. Again and again the Prime Minister, contrary to all precedent, refused to give any opportunity for reviewing the conduct of his own Government. Again and again his power over the majority of the House of Commons was used to prevent any such dis-



cussion. And it was not till the middle of the month of August, till the House was empty, and everyone was exhausted, and, what is more, till the false steps had been irrevocably taken, it was not till then that a full discussion was obtained of the policy to which the Government were committing the country. Again, what happened this year? You know what is the state of things in Egypt. I do not know where to begin in the list of the Government blunders, because it goes so far back; but after the destruction of poor General Hicks, the Government, in a moment of singular ill-advisedness, announced their intention to all the tribes, friendly and otherwise, that they were about to abandon Gordon. It was the first piece of practice to which they ever committed themselves. The result was, of course, the tribes, who always worship the rising sun, turned against us, and the lives of many garrisons to which we were in honour committed became endangered. Well, then the Government conceived the extraordinary idea of sending one man, without forces of any kind, to try and save the lives of those garrisons. It is needless to say that one man did not succeed, and that the garrisons got their throats cut, but that was not all. The one man, the heroic General Gordon, of whose character and efforts it is impossible to speak in language of too high encomium, he in his efforts to do the strange and impossible duty which the Government had imposed upon him placed himself in a position of imminent danger from which he could not rescue himself. And now that the garrisons have had their throats cut, and General Hicks has been butchered, at an enormous cost, something like, I believe, £150,000 or £160,000 a week, we are fitting out a great expedition of the purpose of rescuing the man whom we ought not to have sent on a task which it was impossible for him to perform, in order to save lives of garrisons who have long ago been butchered, and to attain no other object whatever but in



this way to remedy the pile of blunders which one upon another the Government have committed. This is one very serious matter. We are committed, in a time of increasing distress and declining trade, to a tremendous expedition which, when it has succeeded, will only result in putting us in the same position in which we were two years ago, and in which we might have remained if the Government had had ordinary common sense. But that is not all. The Government, which has always been so proud of the concert of Europe, has contrived by an act of illegality—to which they have added features unnecessarily harsh and repulsive—by an act of illegality they have contrived to unite Europe against them, and cannot now count on the countenance of any European Power in solving this difficult problem which they have made for themselves in Egypt.

#### MUZZLING THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Again, I ask, where was the constitutional machine? Why did not the House of Commons interfere to prevent this great absurdity? The answer is the same. Against all former precedent the Government used its majority to prevent the House of Commons having an opportunity of discussion, and the mode in which the Government used its majority was so peculiar that I must venture to dwell for a moment upon it. It was agreed—they seemed to think that they could not in decency refuse to agree—to give a day for the discussion of the policy upon which the late Conference was initiated, which would have given an opportunity for an explanation of the whole Egyptian policy. The Government had given the day; the day came; the mover was there with his motion; all the speakers were ready; all the forces were assembled for a division, when there arose a gentleman—and the Government and the gentleman tell us that it was by accident—there arose Mr.

Goschen, whose word we are bound to believe, to move that it was not expedient that this discussion should take place, and the Government thereupon took up his motion in the strangest possible way. They did not honestly vote with him; they voted against him; but there suddenly spread through their ranks an inconceivable and perfectly unprecedented paroxysm of disobedience. All the most devoted followers of the Government on that occasion voted against them. It was told to me—it has been denied since, but I suspect there was something in it—that some of those who ordinarily marshalled the forces of the Government stood in the door, and by signs not easily mistakable, showed which way their preference lay. At all events, that strange result was produced that son was set against father and brother against brother on that strange and monstrous occasion. Mr. Gladstone's son voted against him. Lord Northbrook's son voted against him. Lord Spencer's brother voted against him. It was a fearful moment for the dominion of the evil powers. The discussion did not take place. The controlling power of the House of Commons was paralysed. No supervision of the Government's efforts was made, and the result is that hopeless *imbroglio* in Egypt, diplomatic and military, upon which, with so much apprehension, the people of this island are now looking. Again, I say, you see here what is the result of departing from your old constitutional rules. You see what is the result of leaving to the Government of the day this despotic, unquestioned power which they claim as the result of Liberal principles. You see now what is the result of this strange and monstrous conversion which makes the party that professed to defend freedom and progress the champions of the power of one man and the advocates of unlimited submission.

## DEPRESSION OF TRADE.

I wish before I sit down to turn for a short time from this subject, because I confess I feel, and I have felt in this autumn campaign, that the result of the argumentative contest to which the Government had challenged us was that a question of importance comparatively secondary was obscuring matters of far greater moment to the country. I will not refer on the present occasion to the great dangers and difficulties which threaten us in connection with foreign affairs, but I will only say this—that it is not by any act of ours if those matters have been pushed back into the second distance, and if the attention of the constituencies and of the people has been concentrated on a matter that is not, speaking comparatively, of primary importance. Lord Hartington reproaches us that in the midst of the dangers which we point out to the Empire we have agitated this question. Our answer is, in the first place, that it was not by our advice that in this particular crisis this question was brought forward at all; and, in the second place, this Government have chosen to desert the road which all former Governments in dealing with the reform of the representation had uniformly trodden; and that if evil results have come from this abandonment of precedent with them and not with us, who point them out, the responsibility must lie. But the matter to which I wish to call your attention—I hardly need to do so—is the condition at this moment in which industries of the country find themselves, and the necessity that your attention and the attention of all who give themselves to politics, of all who exercise any influence, however humble, upon the management of affairs, should be concentrated at this crisis. You know that for years back there has been depression, and that it seems to be going on from bad to worse. You know, no one better, what it is in agri-

culture. It used to be thought, the Duke of Richmond's Commission thought so, that there was nothing but the sun to blame, and that when a good harvest came back agricultural prosperity would return with it; but we have had a year which I imagine is as good as any we can expect to have. We shall not have many such years as we have had last year, and yet I have been told by those to whom the matter is familiar, that the agricultural prospect in many parts of the country was never more gloomy than it is at the present moment. Why is that? First, because your prices have failed. And why have your prices failed? Because your buyers are no longer numerous or keen. And why are your buyers no longer numerous or keen? Because trade and industry no longer give them the material wherewith to purchase. Therefore your inland market is destroyed. I know that outside agriculture a cry of distress is rising from one after another of the great industries by which this great country is supported. We have heard terrible accounts from Sunderland of 30,000 to 40,000 being out of work. When I was in Glasgow they told me there were as many as 50,000 people out of work there. I believe that in Newcastle the distress is assuming graver and graver proportions every day. For some reason or other the great mechanism by which the trade and industry of this country have hitherto been worked seems to have failed at some points, and we only ask, What is the cause, and how far is it possible, that by powers which Government possess, by the action of any political force, any mitigation of this evil can be brought about?

#### THE GOVERNMENT TO BLAME.

Do not let me seem to hold out a hope which I do not myself entertain, that any action of the Government can wholly mitigate the distress under which we suffer. I

know that it is not so, that there are causes outside the power of any political machinery which impose upon us the suffering which is now present, and which is, I fear, in the immediate future. But though we may not be able to prevent, we may be able to palliate and to mitigate, and we must ask ourselves—Is there anything in the political conduct of our Government which aggravates or has aggravated this evil? Is there any change of policy by which these disasters can be mitigated or averted? There is one thing that I have always been anxious to urge upon all assemblies of my countrymen—I feel that it is not sufficiently recognized in the legislation of recent years—and that is that industry cannot flow unless capital is confident, and capital will not be confident as long as it fears that Parliament may meddle with it, and balk it of its profits. There is no question of this, that of recent years Parliament has been singularly meddlesome. I do not say that it is from a bad motive; on the contrary, usually the motive has been philanthropy—possibly in some cases of ill-guided philanthropy—but always pure and humane motives have been at the bottom of this meddlesome legislation, but the effect has been not to interfere with periods of prosperity, but in periods of difficulty to make capital shrink from exposing itself to unknown dangers and to deprive the workman's industry of the only food by which it can be nourished. In acting thus men do not think much of the action of Parliament. They think that, happen what may, be the restrictions what they may, they can at all events secure profit enough to pay them for the risk and trouble they incur. But when bad times come, and when the question in every man's mind arises whether he shall invest his capital in an industry or not, there comes up the doubt—Had I not better desist, seeing the temper that prevails in Parliament? I know they have passed Act after Act, with whatever motive, that



has diminished our profits hitherto. How can I know that they will not pass Acts of the same character in future? And this tendency becomes much more dangerous when the policy of Parliament approaches, in ever so small a degree to the character of confiscation. If there is in the legislation a tendency dishonestly to interfere with the rights of men for the purpose of gaining Parliamentary or electioneering strength, the evil is not confined to the number of people whom their conduct injures. The evil spreads throughout the community. A feeling of fear attaches itself to all enterprises upon which the capitalist is invited to embark, and many more industries suffer than those which are affected by the particular legislation to which I refer.

#### THE DISEASE OF APPREHENSION.

Now, I will give you an example. There has been a good deal of legislation about land. I do not wish in the least to discuss its character, but it has had the effect of frightening the owners of land. What has been the result? I heard in this neighbourhood, in this county, of a very great industrial proposal, which would have given employment to a vast number of men; it was laid before wealthy men, who were interested in it as territorial proprietors, but the answer was, "At ordinary times we might have been glad to look upon this undertaking. It might have added to our property and have promoted the welfare of the community. But with the tendency that has shown itself in Parliament we dare not risk any large sums of money and sink them in improvements which would take many years to realize because we do not know how far the doctrines which now prevail may operate hereafter to prevent us reaping the profits to which we are entitled." I want you, if possible, to put aside all consideration of the owners of land altogether. Do not think whether it is just to them or not. What I want you to think



of is whether it is good for a community, and what I say is that this feeling of doubt and apprehension is the most dangerous disease by which the industry of a community could be affected. It affects a community precisely as cattle disease has affected the industry of cattle breeding in this country. The foot-and-mouth disease was only in a few localities by itself; it did not do an enormous amount of harm, but it filled every man's mind with apprehension, it limited the investment of capital, and as the investment of capital was limited employment was restricted, wages ceased to flow, and distressed populations had to appeal to the sympathy of the public for their support. That is one serious evil of the tendency which recent Parliaments have shown which I should be wrong if I did not impress upon you.

#### FAIR TRADE.

There is another matter—a much more serious matter, and one which you must carefully consider—and that is the condition of the markets of the world. I am not speaking now of foreign policy. No doubt it is very disappointing that a Ministry which came in on principles of peace should have so conducted its foreign policy that at every step it seems to dry up a market by which the produce of the industry of this country might be absorbed. Egypt, the Cape of Good Hope, China—all these are names familiar to the markets of this country. In all these the operations which have taken place, the political events which have developed themselves under the auspices of the present Government, have diminished the purchasing power, have restricted the exportation, and have consequently added to the volume of distress which threatens us in the approaching winter. But there is another and much more serious question. It is a question which politicians do not like to deal with, but which will grow from year to year, and which invites the attention of the

people of this country—I mean the effect which obstructive and hostile tariffs have upon the interests of this country. We have undergone as great a disappointment in this respect. When free trade was adopted, we hoped that free trade would spread through the world, but we are almost the only converts after nearly half a century has passed. It is not only so, but matters seem to be getting worse rather than better. I do not know if you have noticed the fact that in the French Chambers the French Minister has recently announced his intention of putting a duty upon corn and a fresh duty upon cattle. I do not quote it as a case of a tariff which interferes with the exports of this country. I quote it to show you that the anticipations which were entertained years and years ago that all nations, when we once set the example, would follow in our footsteps in free trade, have most unhappily not been realized. Mr. Bright is very fond of referring to the achievements of free trade as one that entitles him for ever to the gratitude of his countrymen. I do not differ as to the value of free trade, but I differ very much as to the value of Mr. Bright's services. When free trade was pressed upon Lord Melbourne just at the close of his administration in 1840—and Lord Melbourne as you know was a Liberal Minister—his answer was, “I admire free trade exceedingly, but it seems to me absurd to introduce it without some communication with the other nations of the world ; because if we do so, we sacrifice the only bribe that we have to offer them when we admit their produce free to induce them to do the same.” That was the opinion of Lord Melbourne. About that time Mr. Bright came into the controversy. He did not deal with it as a matter of scientific discussion, as a question to be argued out before the tribunal of the people ; he dealt with it as an opportunity of setting class against class. He seized upon that one question of the Corn Laws, and he tried, and with

his friends he was successful in his efforts, to persuade them that the only obstacle, the only objection, to free trade was the greed which he imputed to the owners and the occupiers of the land. What was the result of this turn to the controversy given by Mr. Bright? He has always loved to treat every political discussion as material for sowing dissension between the classes of which this community is composed. He raised a formidable agitation, and Sir Robert Peel, rightly or wrongly, was of opinion that it was necessary for the interests of the country that that agitation should be closed. Without waiting for any negotiations with foreign Powers he introduced the system of free trade, which Mr. Gladstone has carried further, and the consequence is that we have now no motive by which we can prevail upon foreign Powers to lower tariffs or open their markets to our industries, which sorely need them. Do not understand me to be blaming Sir Robert Peel. He acted under great difficulties, and there is much to be said for what he did, but that the result of that one-sided policy of free trade has been unfortunate, I for one cannot doubt. It puts us in the position that though we gain by the free importation of corn and other materials so that the prices of them are low to the consumers, we do not gain all that we might have gained. We do not gain an issue for the industry of our own community or for the exportation of goods that we produce. We do not gain an issue to those industries, and therefore those industries languish. Therefore employment is becoming scarcer, wages are becoming smaller, and the distress of the population is becoming larger, and the blessings of free trade, which ought to have been enormous, have been robbed of half their value owing to the precipitate and the improvident manner in which the position of this country as regards other countries was sacrificed.

## BROWBEATING.

Well now, I have pressed this point upon you precisely because in all this matter of free trade there is a habit on the part of ministerial advocates of what I may call browbeating. They treat this question of free trade as if it were some revelation from heaven which it would be blasphemy to inquire into. If you suggest that some particular working of it should be examined, if you ask for an inquiry into the effect on some particular industry, if you say that, owing to some miscalculation, it has not produced all that was expected of it, they cry out, "Oh! you are a mere protectionist; all your protestations are of no avail; we will not listen to you for a moment." I protest against dealing in that spirit with any question which affects the industry and the livelihood of vast masses of our countrymen. Politics are not an exact science, and if those formulas of free trade in which they trust are not producing the results which they anticipated, and which they promised to us, we, at least, without incurring the imputation of any economic heresy, may press for an inquiry to examine where is the defect, where the shortcoming to which our misfortunes point. I am anxious, in speaking the words which I believe will close this autumn controversy, to urge upon you that you should not allow the matters that we have discussed, however important they are, to obscure in your sight the far more momentous questions which surround the industry, the employment, and social well-being of the people. It seems a mere derision to tell men who are starving in Sunderland and Glasgow that we are fighting for the question as to how they shall exercise their privilege at the ballot box; to offer to men who are without employment, who have muscles to labour, but who cannot with their best will compass the limits of their daily need—to offer to them some extension

of the franchise or arrangement of seats is like offering a stone to those who are asking for bread. I entreat you not to allow these questions to be banished from your minds by the din of the controversy which is now passing away. I do not say that I can put into any formula that can be placed at a meeting like this the remedy that may be required. What I ask is that the best intellect of the country shall be applied to the discovery of what is the cost of the most terrible evil by which the country can be afflicted. I know there are complicated difficulties. I know that by diplomatic instruments we, in the full confidence in our political orthodoxy, have been winding band after band round our own limbs, so that in many cases we are not free to move. I know that such a position involves relations unprecedented in the history of the world with our self-governed colonies; I know it involves our Imperial relations with far-distant lands. I do not ask for a simple remedy or profess to have any compact or ready nostrum by which our difficulties can be dispelled. All I propose to you is, do not allow yourselves to be driven off from the consideration of this momentous question by being told that you are protectionists in disguise, or by being told that this is a thing which has been decided many years ago, and that if you venture to inquire into it you will suggest doubts of the soundness of the opinions you entertain. The interests that are involved are far too large, far too deep, too pathetic, and too perilous for arguments of that kind. This agitation which has taken place during the autumn is in many respects highly beneficial to the country. I think it has brought before the minds of the people of the country questions with which they must grapple, facts which they must learn to understand, if they are to be our rulers. I desire nothing better than that they should be thoroughly and perfectly informed. I think



the agitation has had a tendency to strengthen the House of Lords in the opinion of the people of this country. But the only reason for which I could possibly regret it would be if it should have the effect of diverting your minds and the minds of the constituencies of this country from the far graver and more important questions which are approaching us in the immediate future. I should regret it deeply if it blinded your eyes to the dark and black clouds which are surrounding our horizon. I should regret it deeply if it diverted your attention from the problems which you as governors of this country must grapple with and must solve. I should regret it deeply if it induces us for a moment to forget that the first function of Government, its most vital and imperative duty, is to care for the industry, the vast industry, whose prosperity or depression means the difference between well-being and misery, between health and disease, between a life of hope and a life of despair to millions of our toiling fellow-countrymen.

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### *THE JOINT REFORM BILL.*

(AT ARLINGTON STREET, NOVEMBER 19, 1884.)

I have to tender to you and to those whose representatives you are my very sincere acknowledgments for the great kindness of the language which has been used, and for the address, so largely signed, which you have presented to me. We have to undertake great responsibilities and considerable labour, and our support and reward in such efforts is the confidence—the ungrudging confidence—which the Conservative leaders always receive from those whose cause they represent in the country. Certainly no Conservative leaders have more fully received this than those who now hold this



honourable place. The crisis, or so-called crisis, to which Colonel Ruggles-Brise has referred, is passing away; and the Government have, I think, conceded as much in the way of arrangement as might be anticipated if the crisis was to be settled by concession and arrangement with the Government. It might have been terminated in another way. It has been said that we were trying to force a dissolution of Parliament, and that we have failed to do so. I can only refer to my own language on the subject, uniformly maintained, that we have not been trying to force a dissolution of Parliament. We never feared a dissolution of Parliament, indeed, we were perfectly willing and ready to have it, and should have been glad of an appeal to the constituencies. But we have never held out as the function of the House of Lords so to frame its legislative course in respect to the measures brought before it as to force in all cases an appeal to the people. The House of Lords has a right, and it is its first duty, to refuse its assent to whatever it considers to be inexpedient until the opinion of the people can be obtained; but it is not the duty of the House of Lords to refuse its consent to arrangements which it considers judicious merely for the purpose of bringing about a dissolution.

“DEALING WITH ENGLISH GENTLEMEN.”

The arrangement which has been made no doubt depends for its execution in some of its most important particulars on the pledged word of our opponents. I have heard that fact quoted as a ground for dissatisfaction with what has been done. To my mind it is no ground for such dissatisfaction. Though we are dealing with our opponents we are dealing with English gentlemen, and I am quite sure that any paltering with the pledged word which they have passed would be as repugnant to their natural instincts as it would be fatal to the position of any political leaders who could

bring themselves so low. I do not think there is the slightest ground for uneasiness or disturbance on that head. I have no doubt that our opponents and ourselves will do our best, each according to our separate lights, to secure that the coming measure, if we can agree upon it, shall do justice to all interests, and especially that it shall do justice to the rural interest, which from its geographical position, is always liable, unless care is taken, to be denied its true, proper, and sufficient weight in Parliamentary representation. We know that for many generations past it has wanted that proper representation, and now that the principle of numbers is being so much more largely adopted it becomes much more necessary that the balance should be fairly adjusted. We have before us a very arduous task : we shall approach it with the most earnest desire to bring it, if possible, to a successful issue, and to do justice to the interests committed to our charge. Whether we succeed or whether we fail, I hope we shall retain our confidence and the belief you have hitherto entertained, that in any course we are taking we are guided by a strict sense of duty, and a strict anxiety to fulfil the responsible functions which your favour has conferred upon us. And, as I have said, the difficulties in our way will be considerable. But I cannot help feeling that the ample discussion which this subject has received in every part of the country during the past autumn has very much smoothed the way to a satisfactory arrangement, and has forced men to think over the character of the projects submitted to them ; and so far from having to regret that the action of the House of Lords has caused an agitation in the country, I should rather say that the House of Lords is to be congratulated on having forced the country to give its mind to this great question, and to treat it with that deliberation which alone will secure that the sound common sense of Englishmen shall prevent any evil which

may arise from the mistaken ardour of partisans. And now, gentlemen, I have only to express to you my very sincere thanks for the kindness of your address and the hope that we shall retain your confidence in the future.

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### *SOME HOME QUESTIONS.*

(AT NEWPORT, OCTOBER 7, 1885).

I thank you heartily for this reception given by so magnificent a meeting, which in one sense I am most rejoiced to see as indicating the strength of Conservative feeling in this part of the country, but in another sense fills me with apprehension lest I should not be able to convey to all who sit here the observations which I desire to submit to them. It has already been brought to your notice that our advent to office was unexpected, was the result of an action on the part of our opponents which we had no cause to anticipate, and that we took office under many disadvantages. No one who is at all conversant with party tactics would doubt for a moment that it was a great misfortune to us that we were obliged to fight upon a financial proposal which we thought radically unsound, and the result of that battle was that our opponents retired from office. And now that our official career has lasted a short time, I pray you to notice the kind of criticism with which it has been received by our opponents. They do not say that we have done wrong. What they say—and it seems to them the bitterest reproach that they can address to us—is that we have done like themselves. Do not understand me to admit the fact. I only say that that is what they assert, and they do not reproach us with it on the ground of policy, for of course they maintain their own policy, but they

maintain that we are guilty of some great immorality and acting contrary to the professions that we have made. Some orators describe our conduct as slavish; others call it submissive. Lord Hartington says we have been guilty of gross political immorality—he, the great maintainer of principle, who never yielded an opinion in his life—and Mr. Chamberlain reproaches us in language so categorical that I will quote it. Mr. Chamberlain says this: "What is the complaint that I have to make against the present Government? It is that they act and speak in office in absolute contradiction to all that they said and did in opposition." And then he proceeded to single me out. Well now, as he has singled me out, I will speak for myself. I will say that this is an absolute libel; that it has not a shadow or a shred of truth—and that I defy him to point out the language I used in opposition which in office I am contradicting by my deeds. It is a simple test. If he can prove it, he confounds me; if he does not prove it, the reproach which he makes recoils upon himself and covers with the charge of dishonesty the tactics which he pursues. ("Affidavits.") Unfortunately, Mr. Chamberlain is not very strong on affidavits—at least, he is not strong with affidavits that are of any value. The affidavits that he has to use, his friends are obliged to purchase.

#### FOREIGN POLITICS.

Let me take foreign politics for my illustration; and you will allow me to say, in touching on foreign politics, that though I can speak to you with perfect freedom on home politics, you will understand that with the particular office that I have the honour to fill it is not in my power to speak with absolute freedom when touching on foreign affairs. One of the slavish and submissive things that we have done is that we concluded a loan in Egypt which the late Government had undertaken to conclude, but which they were

unable to issue. They obtained the convention on which the loan was grounded. They maintained that a loan was absolutely necessary for the pursuance of their Egyptian policy, but somehow when it came to the test they were unable to raise the loan, and we found the matter in a state of absolute deadlock. Well, again, we are pursuing certain negotiations with respect to the frontier of Afghanistan. Those negotiations were not concluded, but we are conducting them to a successful conclusion. What do they mean when they say "this is slavish or submissive conduct"? They mean that it is the duty of statesmen who succeed to office to be false to the engagements and to disappoint the expectations which their predecessors had raised. If that is their view of public duty they are the best judges of it, and I do not dispute that probably they would do so if they had the chance. But I can only say that it neither is nor ever has been our view of public duty, and that you will search in vain through the speeches of members of the Government for any indication that we thought such disloyalty as that ever entered into our conception as part of the duty of English statesmen. I see that I am reproached because a rising has taken place in Eastern Roumelia, which is contrary to the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin. One of my opponents, Mr. Shaw Lefevre I think it was, said in a tone of loud triumph, "Whatever happens, you will see that the present Government would not venture to use a single English soldier in order to repress that rising." Why? When was it the practice of English statesmen of any party to use the military forces of this country to settle disputes that have arisen in the internal affairs of other nations? It is one of the first principles of English policy that if subjects rise against their ruler, or rulers are severe upon their subjects, we may express our opinions, but we do not interfere by acts—but in



this case I deny that the policy of the Berlin Treaty has been frustrated. In the first place, what has taken place has not restored what was called the Great Bulgaria of the San Stefano Treaty. But that is not the only point. Our object in dealing with those new nationalities of the Balkans was that they should be true and real nationalities. It was the policy of Europe; it was the inevitable result of the progress of events that where there was a homogeneous Christian population subject to the rule of the Porte, that homogeneous Christian population would by its own progressive tendencies, by its own innate character, necessarily before long free itself from that subjection; and it was an operation of that kind which the Berlin Treaty sanctioned. But it was essential that the nations which grew up should represent the real character, and grow by the natural laws of the community to which they belong. Remember, I must speak with all courtesy, and I am anxious that not a word that can give offence should escape my lips, but remember, that when the Berlin Treaty was signed these Bulgarian provinces were occupied by a conquering army, and that if Eastern Bulgaria had then been handed over to Bulgaria to form part of a united State, its future political growth would not have been that which the character and history of the inhabitants would naturally cause, but it would be that which would arise from the influence of the conquering army which was still bivouacked in its midst. That conquering army has retired. Seven years have passed away, and a separate, and distinct, and genuine national character has been formed, and though I do not deny that I think it would have been more fortunate for Europe, and for the Eastern Roumelians themselves that this event should not have happened, still I utterly deny that the provision of the Berlin Treaty has been destitute of the highest beneficent effects. I say that if these two Bulgarias are in the future to develop the strength and



character and idiosyncrasies of a nation, it will be to the care that Europe exercised over their cradle that their future career will be due. I may also say it is not absolutely without precedent in the history of treaties that after a few years some modifications should take place in their provisions. I remember the Treaty of Paris, which approved of the separation of the two Roumanias, but I think before it had been signed two years the two Roumanias united. The Treaty of Vienna provided for the union of the Netherlands and Belgium, but after fifteen years had elapsed the Netherlands and Belgium were separated. Treaties do not affect to overrule the genuine impulses of population. What they do affect to do is to protect that impulse from being stimulated by force, by armies which may have the opportunity at the time of giving a dangerous turn to the people over whom for a moment they chance to rule.

#### OUR TURKISH POLICY.

Our policy, I need not tell you, is to uphold the Turkish Empire wherever it can be genuinely and healthily upheld—but wherever its rule is proved by events to be inconsistent with the welfare of populations, there to strive to cherish and foster strong self-sustaining nationalities, who shall make a genuine and important contribution to the future freedom and independence of Europe. For the moment I hope the Great Powers are agreed that trouble and disturbance ought to go no further, and that their influence will be sufficient to confine within the narrowest possible sphere the modifications of the existing state of things which the impulse of the population has produced. Our object above all things is peace, because if peace is broken you never can be certain, when armies are in the field, that the results to which their efforts will lead will be results favourable to national growth and individual indepen-

dence. You never can be certain that the fate of small nations may not be sacrificed by the exigencies which military events may enable large nations to require.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

Now, turning from foreign politics, I again must call your attention, before saying anything of the problems that lie before us, to the peculiar mode in which our opinions are dealt with by our opponents. Their plan is this: They first sketch out to you in brilliant and imaginative colours what they think a Conservative policy is. They prove to you that that ought to be a Conservative policy, and then when as is natural it turns out that they know nothing about it, and that the Conservatives take a very different view, they declare that Conservatives are the basest of mankind, and have abandoned their own proper ideal for the sake of the sweets of office. I venture to think that Conservatives alone should be accepted as the exponents of Conservative opinions. I don't know anything so comical as a Radical trying to point out what Conservatism should be. One of the subjects which, by common consent, must occupy the attention of the future Parliament is one which our adversaries would persuade you that we have no right to touch—I mean the subject of local government. I see that even Mr. Gladstone—in that long and dreary epistle which, like an emperor of old, he has written from his retirement—even Mr. Gladstone is disposed to deny us the right of entertaining the question of local government. He is gracious enough to admit that I have expressed very strong opinions in its favour—but he proceeds to point out that I have not the slightest influence over my party—and that my opinions must not be taken as any proof of what they would really think. I was very much struck by this warning on his part, and I thought it

proper to provide myself with undoubted credentials, and therefore I did not venture to address you until I had the privilege of meeting the Cabinet. I do not know whether he will say if the Cabinet has any influence over the Conservative party—but if the sixteen gentlemen who sit there are to be accepted as any kind of evidence of the opinions of the Conservative party, I will say, that without doubt, without hesitation, without a dissenting voice, they are strongly of opinion that large reforms in our local government in the direction of increasing the power of that local government are absolutely necessary. Bear in mind what a true reform in local government means. It does not only mean—I quite admit that the local authorities should be popularly elected—it does not only mean that. When you have got at what you want, when you have provided the proper constitution of local authority, you must provide that the local authority has sufficient powers, and that it gets these powers by diminishing the excessive and exaggerated powers which have been heaped on the central authorities in London. That I claim to be a special Tory doctrine, which we have held through good report and evil report for many and many a generation. It has always been our contention that the people in their localities should govern themselves—and that the attempt to imitate Continental plans by drawing all authority back on the central power, though it might produce a more scientific, a more exact, and, for the moment, a more effective administration, yet was destitute of these two essentials of all good government—it did not provide a government that was suited to the facts and idiosyncrasies of the particular communities for whom it was designed, and it did not teach the people to take that active interest in their own government which is the only training that makes a man a true and worthy citizen. These are doctrines that we have held for a very long time. We

urged them—that is to say, our fathers urged them—perhaps with undue insistency, when they opposed the introduction of the new poor law. I am not blaming the new poor law. It was a necessary reform in order to meet a tremendous evil; but it did carry with it this spirit of centralisation which has eaten far too deeply into our institutions. It was opposed at the time by the Tories earnestly and strongly; and though I should be very sorry to undo the beneficent action which may fairly be attributed to the new poor law, still I feel that the education of the country is so far advanced, that the dissemination of men capable of taking a part in local government is so great, that the time has come when many of those powers which are now given to the Local Government Boards and other powers in London ought to be given to local county authorities, who will be able to govern, not necessarily in the most scientific or most accurate fashion, but in a fashion which is liked by the people over whom they rule.

#### THE QUESTION OF RATING.

Joined to that reform is one which I have very much at heart, which I have urged so often, that I do not think even Mr. Chamberlain will say that I am trespassing on his copy-right in claiming it. It is that all men, in proportion to their ability, should contribute to the expenses of local government. As you know, now it is done by what are called rates, and rates are not levied on all men according to their ability, but only according to the amount of land or houses that they may possess. They may possess very large resources of other kinds, and yet escape altogether contributing to the administration of local government, which is as advantageous to them as to their fellows. This is not merely an injustice to them, but it does a great deal of harm.

I have been sitting for two years on a commission with respect to the housing of the poor, which was appointed in answer to a motion that I moved in the House of Lords. I have a strong feeling that the unfair incidence of rates, not in all parts of the country, but in many parts of the country, has materially aggravated the difficulties which the poor find in getting fair and decent lodging. The reason I saw thus stated in a Liberal paper the other day. In some county—I think Essex was the one mentioned—the rates had run up as much as 10s. in the pound. That happily is not a very common experience, but we have heard of 5s. and 4s. not unfrequently. What is the reason of that? A man has a certain amount of money to invest. He says to himself, “If I put this into consols I shall not pay any taxes at all; if I build cottages for the poor with it I shall have to pay half, or a quarter, or a fifth of my profits, as the case may be, into the local exchequer.” Of course he naturally says, “I would rather find some other investment for my property than this unremunerative one of building houses for the poor.” I do not say there are not other difficulties when that obstacle is surmounted, but it is making a gratuitous obstacle and an unnecessary difficulty in a reform, the urgency of which we all admit, when you place, as it were, a special penalty upon the men who provide houses in which the poor can live. Therefore I hold it to be an indispensable part of any reform of local government, that it should include the sanction of this great principle—that all men should pay according to their ability for the support of local government.

#### SUNDAY CLOSING.

But there is another question on which I think you know something in this, or at least in a somewhat neighbouring locality, and that is what I may call the burning question of Sunday closing. Sunday closing, looked at



from a purely impartial point of view—and I am bound to say that those people who do not go to the public-houses are very impartial in the matter—presents this difficulty. Though in Scotland you have unanimity, and in Ireland you have practical unanimity, and in Wales you have an unanimity qualified by a certain amount of recent experience—and I am bound to say that in Cornwall you have what appears to be unanimity—when you get to the more strictly Teuton portion of the country, you find anything but unanimity. One of my earliest Parliamentary experiences was the present Lord Ebury, then Lord Robert Grosvenor, proposing a Bill introducing a very strict Sunday closing, which I think applied to eating as well as drinking in the East of London. Well, he passed his Bill through the second reading. I think he got it as far as Committee, but the moment that the population of London heard of it, they took very effective measures; they marched into Hyde Park and broke the windows of the houses of every member of Parliament they could find. But though there was no logical connection between the remonstrance and the evil, the remonstrance had its effect, and the Bill was withdrawn. I don't know that the population of London has altered very much, and my impression is that if you tried Sunday closing on them you would be sure to tire of it before you got very far. Looked at from a perfectly impartial point of view it is impossible not to see that the difficulties of a uniform system for the whole country on this question are extreme, and if we had not been afraid of running against some rather antiquated views and doctrines on the subject, we should have adopted the simple practice of allowing each locality to decide itself what it liked to do in the matter. I venture to say in the case of most of those who hear me, two words have rushed to their minds when I made that observation. They have said “he is proposing local option.” Well, local option



is a thing of which the value differs exactly according to the value of the thing concerning which the local option is to take place. I do not think local option is a bad thing where the thing to which it is to be applied is perfectly legitimate, and we have admitted that the closing of public-houses on Sunday where this is according to the views of the population, a legitimate action to take place. Local option is also used for very different processes, with which I have no kind of sympathy. It is proposed that localities shall have the power where the number of non-thirsty souls exceeds the number of thirsty souls of saying that the thirsty souls shall have nothing at all to drink. Well, that seems to me to trench upon the elementary liberties of mankind. If I like to drink beer it is no reason that I should be prevented from drinking beer because my neighbour does not like it, and that seems to me a simple doctrine which lies at the root of all liberty. If you sacrifice it in the matter of alcohol you will find very soon that you will sacrifice other matters also, and that those doctrines of civil and religious liberty for which we have fought so hard and undergone so much to establish will be gradually whittled away. I should therefore be inclined to entrust the local authority with the settlement of this difficult question of Sunday closing, but always on one condition, that they should not be entrusted with the permanent settlement of it; that is to say, that after two or three intervals if they do not like what they had done they should be at liberty to reverse their steps. I don't understand any permanent vows on this matter. Perhaps very often the best way of getting a fact into people's heads is to enable them to try it, and I dare say many people who might or might not like Sunday closing would alter their opinions, whatever they were, if they were subjected to actual experience. I therefore think it important that the local authorities

should have the power, after some fixed interval, of altering in that respect any resolution to which it might come.

#### LICENSING.

For myself, although I am treading on difficult ground, I should be prepared to go one step further, and to place the power of licensing in the hands of local authorities to the extent to which magistrates have it now. I see no reason for thinking that the local authority would exercise it less wisely and less liberally than the magistrates, and I cannot blind my eyes to the fact that special sectional and not always fair opinions sometimes gain ground on the Bench, and really disqualify the magistrates from exercising a perfectly satisfactory jurisdiction on the subject. But while I offer that opinion with some diffidence, knowing it is opposed to the opinions of many whom I much respect, still it will be necessary to make this observation. One reason why the local authority will be a good authority to manage the licensing question is, that if any unfair encroachment is made on the industry of the publicans or others, fair compensation undoubtedly must be given, and the local authority would have to provide that fair compensation. I believe that the terror of having to provide that fair compensation would furnish no inconsiderable motive to induce the local authority to observe a wise and cautious moderation in the exercise of this important duty.

#### LOCAL AUTHORITY IN IRELAND.

You will probably ask me how far I am inclined to carry this extension of local authority, and to say how far are you inclined to make it general; how far are you inclined to extend it to Ireland. That is a very difficult question I admit. Our first principle on which we have always gone is to extend as far as we can to Ireland all

those institutions that we have established in this country. But I fully recognise that, in the case of local institutions especially, there is one limiting consideration, which in the present state of Ireland you cannot leave out of account. A local authority is more exposed to the temptation and has more of the facility for enabling a majority to be unjust to the minority than is the case where the authority derives its sanction and extends its jurisdiction over a wider area. That is one of the weaknesses of local authorities. In a large central authority the wisdom of several parts of the country will correct the folly or the mistakes of one. In a local authority that correction to a much greater extent is wanting, and it would be impossible to leave that out of sight in the extension of any such local authority to Ireland. The fact is that the population is on certain subjects deeply divided, and it is the duty of every Government in all matters of essential justice to protect the minority against the majority.

#### IMPERIAL FEDERATION.

With respect to large organic questions connected with Ireland that have been often mentioned, I cannot say very much about them, though I can speak emphatically. I have nothing to say but that the traditions of our party are on this subject clear and distinct, and that you may rely upon it our party will not depart from them. We look upon the integrity of the Empire as a matter more important than almost any other political consideration that you can name, and we could not regard with favour any proposal which directly or indirectly menaced that which is the condition of England's position among the nations of the world. If I had spoken three days ago I should not have said anything more upon the Irish matter, but I observed, I think it was yesterday, in the news-

papers a remarkable speech from the Irish leader, in which he referred in so marked a way to the position of Austria and Hungary, that I gathered his words were intended to cover some kind of new proposition, and that some notion of Imperial Federation was floating in his mind. In speaking of Imperial Federation as entirely apart from the Irish question, I wish to guard myself very carefully. I consider it to be one of the questions of the future. I believe that the drawing nearer of the colonies of this country is the policy to which English patriots must look who desire to give effect in the councils of the world to the real strength of the English nation, and who desire to draw all the advantage that can be drawn from that marvellous cluster of dependencies which distinguishes our Empire above any other empire which ancient or modern times record. Our Colonies are tied to us by deep affection, and we should be guilty not only of coldness of heart, but of gross and palpable folly, if we allow that sentiment to cool, and do not draw from it as much advantage for the common weal of the whole of the English race as circumstances will permit us to do. I know that the idea of Imperial Federation is still shapeless and unformed, and it is impossible for any man to do more than to keep his mind open to a desire to give effect to aspirations which bears the mark of the truest patriotism upon them, and therefore I wish to avoid any language that may seem to discourage the plan in which perhaps the fondest hopes of high Imperial greatness for England in the future may be wrapped. But, with respect to Ireland, I am bound to say that I have never seen any plan, or any suggestion, that will give me at present the slightest ground for anticipating that it is in that direction that we shall find any satisfactory solution of the Irish problem. I wish that it may be so, but I think we shall be holding out false expectations if we avow a belief which, as yet at all events, we cannot enter-

tain. To maintain the integrity of the Empire must undoubtedly be our first policy with respect to Ireland.

#### THE CRIMES ACT.

But perhaps you will say there is more pressing matter—that the elementary conditions of social order are not maintained; and I have seen plenty of suggestions that the Government was to blame for this because they allowed the Crimes Act not to be renewed. Are you quite certain, in the first place, that the Crimes Act would have prevented what is taking place now? Are you quite certain, in the second place, that it was in our power to renew the Crimes Act? Both these questions require to be answered in the affirmative before you can blame the Government. With respect to our power I would remind you of this: You had passed an Act of Parliament giving in unexampled abundance, and to unexampled freedom, supreme power to the great masses of the Irish people—supreme power as regards their own locality. You had done that, you were at the close of a Parliament elected on the system which was condemned, you were on the verge of the election of a new Parliament. To my mind, that opinion was formed long before the change of Government occurred. To my mind the renewal of exceptional legislation against a population whom you had treated legislatively to this marked confidence was so gross in its inconsistency that you could not possibly hope, during the few remaining months that were at our disposal before the present Parliament expired, to renew any legislation which expressed on one side a distrust of what on the other side your former legislation had so strongly emphasized. The only result of your doing it would have been, not that you would have passed the Act, but that you would have promoted by the very inconsistency of the position that you were occupying—by the untenable character of the arguments that you were



advancing—you would have produced so intense an exasperation amongst the Irish people that you would have produced ten times more evil, ten times more resistance to law, than your Crimes Act, even if it had been renewed, would possibly have been able to check. The effect of the Crimes Act has been very much exaggerated. While it was in existence there grew up this real danger, out of which the boycotting proceeds. There grew up a thousand branches of the National League all over Ireland; they grew up while the Crimes Act was in existence, and it is from them that this boycotting proceeds with which you have so much difficulty in coping. The truth is that the provisions against boycotting in the Crimes Act were of very small effect. It grew up constantly in spite of the action of the Crimes Act, and it grew up for this reason—that it is a crime of that character which legislation has very great difficulty in reaching. I have seen it said that the Crimes Act diminished outrages, that boycotting operated through outrage, and therefore that the Crimes Act diminished boycotting. In the first place the fact is not true. The Crimes Act did not diminish outrages. I have a return of outrages in September, during which the Crimes Act was not in existence, and comparing that with the return in August, during which it was in existence, I find that the outrages which took place in September were considerably fewer than the outrages which took place in August. There is, therefore, no ground for saying that in the present condition—I am not speaking for the past condition of the Irish temper—the Crimes Act was any restraint on outrage, and it certainly was no restraint on boycotting. Boycotting does not operate through outrage. Boycotting is the act of a large majority of a community resolving to do a number of things which are themselves legal, and which are only illegal by the intention with which



they are done. For instance, I will give you an example of boycotting. You will tell me whether you think any legislation such as the Crimes Act was likely to affect it. Not very long ago a man who was boycotted walked into a Roman Catholic church, when every one of the rest of the congregation got up and left the church. The priest said to the man, "If you like I shall go on with the service and finish it for your benefit alone; but I would recommend you, on the whole, to go away." What is the use of Acts of Parliament against a system of that kind? You cannot indict people because they do not go to church or because they leave church. In truth, it is much more similar to the excommunication or interdict of which we have read in the Middle Ages than any other mode of action with which we are familiar.

#### BOYCOTTING.

Don't imagine for a moment that the Irish Government are idle or quiet or inert in putting the remedies of the ordinary law into action. At this moment thirty-five prosecutions for boycotting are pending, and that alone will show you that the Irish Government are doing their best—when you consider the difficulties of getting evidence upon such a subject—are doing their best to meet the evil. I believe the truth about boycotting is this—that it depends upon a passing humour of the majority of the population. I do not believe in any community it is enduring. I doubt whether in any community the law has been able to offer a complete, a perfect, and a satisfactory cure, but I believe it contains its own Nemesis within itself. It presents so much irresponsible power, it is used with so much freedom in order to gratify private grudges, and to attain private ends, that at last it falls by its own weight, and is discouraged and stopped by the very persons to whom it owed its birth. That is now,

I believe, taking place in Ireland, and the very National League find that the Frankenstein they have created threatens their interests as much as those of any other interest in the community, and that boycotting is on the decline. But be that as it may, I admit in the fullest and frankest manner that a Parliament possessing a full mandate, and a Government leading that Parliament, are bound above everything else to exhaust every possible remedy in order that men may pursue free from illegal molestation their industry each in his own station in life.

#### THE LAND QUESTION.

Now, there is another very important question of which you have heard a great deal, and that is the land. Now about the land. There seems to be an idea that it is the act of some very wicked person that the land is not split up into a number of peasant proprietorships, consisting of from ten to fifty acres, all over the country. I will say at once that I regret exceedingly the disappearance of the yeomanry in this country. I don't say that under any pressure of present political motives, for I have said the same thing on every opportunity that has served me for twenty years past. I regard it as a great misfortune for this country, but it does not follow because I recognize the existence of a misfortune that I believe that any Act of Parliament will cause that misfortune to come to an end. People seem to imagine that no matter what the evil is, it is in the power of Queen, Lords, and Commons to put a stop to it. I wonder we have not seen brought in an Act of Parliament to stop the occurrence of bad weather on the occasion of political demonstrations. By all means make the land as easily transferable as you can. A proof of this curious travesty of our opinions which we read in our opponents' speeches is the statement that we are opposed to measures for facilitating the transfer of

land and for cheapening it. Why, the land belongs to a great number of people, many of whom are members of the Tory party. Do you imagine that we are possessed by so inconceivable and so monstrous a taste that we like paying lawyers' bills. Lawyers' bills are as odious to the squire as to any other member of the human race, and I will venture to say that there is no squire who would not gladly welcome any measure by which that great evil could be checked. But my experience is, after having seen successively the greatest masters of the law address themselves to this great problem, and having seen my lawyers' bills concurrently increase in a steady ratio, I have become very sceptical of all promises of remedy in that respect. But you may be quite certain that we, more than any party, desire that the transfer of land should be made cheap and easy. Mr. Goschen has told us that the transfer of land ought to be as cheap and easy as the transfer of Consols, an observation which convinced me that Mr. Goschen knows a good deal more about Consols than he does about land. With respect to land you have two difficulties. You have first to indicate—clearly what is the bit of land you want to sell, which is not necessary in Consols; and secondly, you have to show that you are able to sell the land—that you are the right person to sell it—that it is not burdened by any mortgage or anything of that kind, which would render you unable to sell it. And in these two difficulties lie the whole of the expense of the transfer of land. I have talked over the matter with my noble friend the Lord Chancellor, who I am bound to tell you is more sanguine than I. He says he believes the thing can be done. He is not discouraged by the bones of the knights who have preceded him who have been slain in this great enterprise, and he thinks he still can win the enchanted princess himself. He believes—and there is no man more competent to form such a

belief—he believes that with a complete and compulsory system of registration the transfer of land can be made cheap and easy. With respect to that belief I will only say this—that at all events experiments ought to be tried. We never have had a compulsory registration of titles. There is no reason why we should not, except the expense and the trouble of working out the details. If we set it up and it does not achieve the object we have in view, no harm has been done, and we are able to show that it is no act of ours if the difficulties of land transfer continue. On the other hand, if, as we all must wish, it should be successful, a great evil will have been removed, and not only will the lawyers' bills of landowners have been diminished, but an opportunity will have been given to all those labouring men who desire it, and who are able to purchase, to attach themselves as freeholders to the land. There is nothing I desire more than that, if only it can be achieved. But remember that one of the conditions, one of the absolute conditions of cheap transfer of land is—I must use the technical word—a short law of prescription; that is to say, that when a man has been registered as owner of the land for a certain length of time his title should be absolute and indefeasible, and there should be no more question about it. That is a point upon which you will come into conflict with a very important authority named the Court of Chancery. But I hope to overcome it. They have whittled away the doctrine of prescription until they have diminished many of its admirable effects.

#### RESTITUTION.

But I wish to draw attention to a less dignified subject, but one more in the view of the public than the Court of Chancery, and that is Mr. Jesse Collings. Mr. Jesse Collings has a wonderful scheme for providing that anybody who has got land,

which was common land, either a roadside or belonging to big common land in any way within the last fifty years, should be put to the proof, that he or his predecessors in title acquired that common land lawfully, and if they have not got that proof they shall lose it. The existing law of the country—mind you, the existing law of the country—is that after twelve years any man occupying a bit of land is the owner of the land. Mr. Jesse Collings says, “No; if within fifty years that land has been common land, this prescription shall not apply.” I say, if Mr. Jesse Collings’s Act was passed into law, it would have the effect of doubling the cost of the transfer of land from one end of the country to the other. Every man who bought land would have to make himself quite certain that that land had not within fifty years included any portion that was common land. To prove a negative is proverbially difficult, and he would have not only to appeal to documents, he would have to obtain the memory of the oldest inhabitant, a gentleman whose memory requires to be refreshed by abundant subsidy; and whenever a transfer of land took place it would, in addition to all the difficulties which it has now to face, it would have to overcome this additional obstacle, that the vendor would have to prove this very difficult point, that no portion of the land that he sold had been roadside land since the year 1836. I will venture to say that the requirement would add quite 100 per cent. to the cost of the transfer of land in every part of the country. I have quoted that in order to show you the recklessness with which these land propositions are made by people who have never gone out of the smoke of a smoky town or the neighbourhood of a big town-hall. If you want the land to be dealt with—I hope you will not consider it to be the assumption on our part—I am afraid it must be dealt with by people who know something about the land. If you hand it over to inventive cockneys, who know nothing but what they



have read in magazines, I am afraid you will only make ten times worse the evil that they affect to cure.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSIONERS.

I am afraid I am detaining you at great length, but there is one change which I should like to advocate, which I believe would place a great deal of land in the market; though, mind you, I have my doubts as to who the purchasers of the land would be. I have observed during these years of distress that the position of clergymen who possess glebe lands and of charitable foundations depending upon small bequests of land is pitiable in the extreme. I have known clergymen enjoying large incomes in the good times quite suddenly, by their farms being thrown on their hands, being reduced to absolute beggary. What is a clergyman to do when a farm is thrown on his hands? As a life-tenant he can raise no capital to work it. As a clergyman he can give no time to attending to it. His time is fully occupied. No farmer will take it, and he is absolutely without resources, and the large income which he enjoyed the day before has vanished like a dream. His case is hard enough, but there is the case of those small charitable foundations, where a number of helpless orphans and widows are dependent upon the solvency of the trust. The solvency of the trust depends upon the land which is thrown on their hands. The farmers will face it no longer, the trustees cannot give their time or capital to it, and it becomes a white elephant that brings them nothing but ruin. I should like to see the greatest facilities placed in the hands of all clergymen and of ecclesiastical and charitable corporations to sell—mind, always at a fair price and by free contract—to sell the land on which their income depends. They would be much happier and much better off if their income were in Consols. Mind you, I don't wish to apply any sort of com-



pulsion to them, but at present their liberty is restrained by the demands of a certain private central office, which exists in London, known as the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. I have had some dealings with the Ecclesiastical Commission, and I have vowed that no consideration whatever would induce me to have any more. I do not accuse them of any moral fault at all. They are the perfection of spotless integrity, but their integrity is so spotless that they take every conceivable precaution that the most fertile imagination can suggest, and their precautions are so minute and careful that it is impossible that any transaction, however innocent, can find its way through the meshes they spread before it. I wish to get rid of the consent of the Ecclesiastical Commission. I should like to see each clergyman and patron or the trustees of each charitable society have the right to sell their land and invest the proceeds in Consols, and, except there was a case of manifest fraud, that nobody should have a right to interfere with the transaction. I believe if you did that you would bring into the market a large quantity of land all over the country—land peculiarly suited for gardens and allotments, if such were desired; land which if there exists this class of agricultural labourers desiring to become small farmers would precisely suit their demands; and land, which at all events, in its present condition is ill-placed and would be better placed in the hands of any private owner to whatever class he might belong.

#### STRUGGLING AGAINST THE LAWS OF NATURE.

I have shown in what way—if I may use a vulgar simile—the wheels of land transfer might be greased. I believe it might be very materially simplified; I believe it might be very materially cheapened; but I do not believe you will find any very large number of peasant proprietors

spring out of the legislation which you authorize. I do not believe it for this reason, that this country has had numbers of small freeholds from one end of it to the other for a hundred years and more. The steady process has been that the owners of these small freeholds have sold their land, and they have been merged into the land of larger freeholds. Now, setting all prejudice aside, can you interpret the meaning of this history? Supposing you saw a hillside upon which the larch had gradually grown and the beech-tree had gradually died away, what would you say of the wisdom of any man who declared "The beech-tree is the right thing; the larch ought not to exist there; I will cut down the larches and plant beeches instead?" You would know he was struggling against the laws of Nature, and those who cry out for the creation of peasant proprietors, however estimable their motives and however desirable the body they seek to establish, are committing as great an absurdity as the man who would try to force the hand of Nature in the matter of the beech and the larch. The trouble which was prophesied at the time when the Corn Laws were abolished has, after a long delay, come to pass. The growing of wheat has become over a vast extent of the country an unprofitable occupation. On the growing of wheat depends the continuance of arable land, for it is in the knowledge of the farmers that if the wheat crop does not pay, the chance of his arable land paying is very small. The consequences are in every part of the country, but especially in the East, large tracts of land are going into grass. Grass does not pay well, but still it does pay moderately, and the landowner or farmer, be he proprietor or occupier, naturally takes to that form of using his land which is the most profitable to him. The inevitable result is that the number of hands required in agriculture diminishes. Three men to every hundred acres are required for arable land, and only one for pasture land. The irresis-

tible force of economical facts is driving large tracts of the country from arable into pasture. Is there any use, is there any wisdom, in expressing our surprise and trying to resist the process, a process dictated by laws and powers far higher than all that the boasted omnipotence of Parliament can exercise? The result naturally is that large numbers of persons are out of employment, so they seek employment in the towns and diminish the wages of those who are already there. It is a very grievous process. I would to God we could arrest it, but we shall only make matters worse if we resist it, in spite of the teachings of experience and the knowledge of political economy that we possess.

#### SMALL HOLDINGS.

You have heard a proposal for diminishing this evil, for reversing the process that is taking place, for driving back the people who are leaving the country, and of recultivating the land which has passed from arable to pasture. It is proposed that it should be done by the local authority; that the local authority shall be empowered to take compulsorily the land of whom they please at a price which is not the price given at present; at a price lower than that price; and that they should be empowered to let this land in small farms of ten or fifteen or twenty acres to the labourers in each place. Is there anything in your experience of human affairs to induce you to believe that such a process would be successful? Just consider what it involves. The local authority would have to borrow money in order to purchase the land, and you borrow money at 4 per cent., but nobody ever succeeded in making more than 2 per cent. out of the ownership of land. Well, then, on every acre of land the difference between 2 and 4 per cent. would have to be paid out of the rates. Supposing the price of land to be—I don't know what it is now, it used to be £50 an acre, but let us say it is £25 an

acre. Well, in order to purchase twelve acres of land you would have to give £300, on which you would get £6, but you would pay £12 for that £300, and the difference of £6 would have to be paid out of the rates. The £6 would be simply a present to the man whom you put in occupation of the land. That would simply be a revival of the old practice abandoned some fifty years ago of subsidizing rent out of outdoor relief—outdoor relief in relief of rent. That is the beginning and end of Mr. Chamberlain's proposal. Well, then, supposing this was profitable and good for the occupants. If it was bad it would come to nothing. But if it was good for the occupants there would be great competition for it, and who would choose among the competitors, who would decide who was to have this benefit of 2 per cent. on the value of the land given to him out of the rates? Obviously it must become a matter of choice, a matter of favouritism, a matter depending on the constitution of the local authority, a matter of political corruption. This scheme is the Budget of the caucus. It is the financial proposition by which the machinery of Birmingham is to be kept going. It is the mode of furnishing in each constituency in the country voters who shall be bound by the dearest pecuniary interests to vote as the wirepullers of Birmingham shall tell them. That is its side as it affects the persons who take the land. And now let us consider how it affects the persons from whom the land is taken. The local authority is to have the power of taking land compulsorily at less price than he from whom it is taken likes. Do you imagine that that tremendous weapon won't be used? Do you imagine that that will not express the spite, or political antagonism, or animosity, which the majority of the local council may feel? Do you imagine that they will not use it to increase their power, and that where any men resist their will they will not threaten them with a forcible seizure at below cost, and

make them feel the supremacy of local councils? Do not imagine, as Mr. Chamberlain tries to persuade you, that this is merely a question for the rich. You know well there are large holders and small holders. This power must extend to the small just as well as to the large. A large owner may be able to fight it, to appeal, to resist it in a thousand ways. But the small owner threatened with the seizure of his land, if not the absolute slave of the local councils, will be utterly at their mercy, and unable to say a word on behalf of his own honest sentiments. That is the real secret of this proposition. It offers no real relief for the labouring man. Nobody thinks that it will be possible for the occupant of land in small quantities to do what the occupant in large quantities has failed. Men with capital, with horses, with machinery, in many places have failed to make the occupation of land pay. Do you imagine that men without capital, horses, or machinery will be more successful? Again, agriculture is a pursuit of which the remunerativeness depends upon being able to average bad with good. One year you cannot pay anything, you are utterly ruined; the next if you can hold out will give you a result that enables you to cover the loss of the year that is gone by, and so the man who has capital can pass the bad periods and recoup himself when good periods come. That lies in the very essence of agriculture, which depends upon our changeable climate. But how does the poor man with ten or fifteen acres and no capital stand? Why the first year of loss drives him to the money-lender and makes him a ruined man for life. Depend upon it, therefore, there is no prospect of relief to the labouring man in this proposal; there is only the prospect of a most ingenious, most carefully thought-out scheme of political domination and corruption—to which if you retain any of the instincts of freemen you will offer a firm and unwavering resistance.



## EDUCATION.

I have been so long that I am quite ashamed of myself—but I have one matter more to talk of, and that is the question of education. I think, and in this I have the singular and unusual felicity of being very much at the same point of view as Mr. Gladstone. I think that this question cannot be dealt with in the summary way in which Mr. Chamberlain has dealt with it. I have no doubt whatever that the effect of the compulsory character of education does give to the poorer classes of the community a considerable claim. If they ask for a thing and cannot get it, it is unreasonable to tax the rest of the community to give it to them. But if you say to them, "You shall have this thing whether you like it or not," and then they cannot pay for it without enormous pressure on their resources, I must say there is a considerable claim that they should be assisted. But they are assisted under the present law. I do not think that the law is liberal enough. I should like to make it more liberal, but I do not see because I think it reasonable that those who are in very poor circumstances, and to whom a portion of the fee is remitted, that we should therefore make a present of large sums of public money to a great number of people who are perfectly competent to pay for the education of their own children. I should like to see it made more liberal on behalf of those upon whom the present law presses in undue severity, but I should shrink very much before I gave to every subject of the Queen a right whether he was rich, well-to-do, moderately well off, or poor to have his children educated at the public expense. I do not see any reason for adding to that extent to our public burdens, and I believe it will be some time before the tax-payers of this country will accept it. But I cannot help seeing in this proposal (as



indeed Mr. Morley has clearly indicated) a desire to get rid of that which we cherish as one of our most important privileges—the right of religious education. I am not speaking for my own church alone. What I claim I would extend with equal hand to the Nonconformists of Wales or to the Roman Catholics of Ireland. But I do claim that to whatever church or sect of Christianity they belong there should be the utmost opportunity given to educate the people in that belief of Christianity instead of driving them away to the lifeless, boiled down, mechanical, unreal religious teaching which is prevalent in Board Schools. Believe me, the essence of religious teaching is that the teacher should believe that which he teaches, and should be delivering as he believes it the whole message of truth that he has received. Unless there is that sympathetic, that magnetic feeling which is established between pupil and teacher by the confidence of the people that the teacher is dealing honestly with them, their religious teaching is a farce and a sham, and therefore I would give the utmost freedom that could possibly be given to all the denominations of this country to teach as they believe to the children of their own flocks that which they esteem the highest truths of the Christianity they profess. Much as individually I may differ from many of their opinions, I am convinced that when all differences are allowed for there is a common residue of belief in Christianity which so long as it be taught sincerely will work its magical effect upon the hearts and consciences of the young. You have heard much, perhaps too much, in recent days of crimes and sins and sorrows which it is a shame to mention. You have heard statements of corruption of which you have not dreamt, and you have heard proposals for legislation, by which it was idly hoped that such corruption should be stemmed. There is only one remedy for such corruption, and that is the teaching of the faith of Christianity to the

young, and therefore I commend to you earnestly to defend, as the most cherished possession, that to which we, as the citizens of a free country, have in this land the right—that our children and the children of those who think with us, should be taught the whole truth of Christianity as we believe it, and that no theories about State interference, no secular doctrines, shall be allowed to interfere with, to diminish, or to frustrate this highest privilege that Christianity can possess.

MR. GLADSTONE'S LAST SURRENDER.

And now one word more and I have done. You have read, no doubt, what I have called the long and dreary epistle from the retirement of the leader of the late Ministry. You have seen how amid other things he has consigned to the category of doubtful matters which depend upon the majority of voices, his convictions and his course in reference to the Established Church of these islands. It is his last surrender, it is the last of the opinions of his youth that he has given up, that he has sacrificed upon the altar of party. I could have wished that this crowning abandonment of the convictions of his youth had been spared to us. I confess I never believed that I should see Mr. Gladstone among those who would admit the disestablishment and disendowment of the Established Church of this land as among the possible measures to which he could be induced to consent. But deeply as we may lament this evidence of the power which party ties possess, we must not the less misinterpret the significance of this avowal or the duty that it imposes upon us. It means that the time of ultimate and supreme conflict is at hand; it means that the danger which we have foreseen for many days is now close to our doors. It may come upon us even in the new Parliament. The language that Mr. Chamberlain has used,

the fact that he has used it without rebuke, the fact that he is being allowed to assume the position of leader of the Liberal party almost without hindrance and without demur—these things now show that even in the next Parliament you may have a proposal for the disestablishment of the Church of this country; a proposal more fraught with frightful disaster to us as a nation, more fraught with calamitous events than anything in legislation that has taken place since Parliamentary Government was founded. I see it is said that in other churches in other lands the voluntary principle has succeeded. Yes, but there the voluntary principle has grown up side by side with these churches. In America the voluntary principle succeeded, because from the very first, when the churches were few, when the population was small, the voluntary principle was appealed to. Endowments were furnished, and the American Church is at this time endowed in sufficient measure to meet at all events her absolute necessities. Again, look to the Nonconformist bodies; with them endowments have grown up gradually from their outset, from the beginning when they were small and there was little to provide, and so provision has constantly been poured forth until they have an accumulation of resources which enable them to meet all the necessary claims that are made upon them. But nothing of this can be or will be the case with the Church of England. That Church will be stripped and bare—barring the life interest of those who actually hold the livings—the Church will be stripped and bare, and in every part of the land the machinery by which God's Word has been preached, by which Christianity has been upheld, by which the sick have been visited and comforted, by which all the ministrations of Religion have been carried to suffering humanity in its various stages of need—all this machinery will be by one blow destroyed, and gene-

rations will be required before it could be replaced. This it is which, with a light heart, Mr. Gladstone is prepared to sacrifice. We can only accept his announcement as a call to greater energy and preparations on our part.

#### AN APPEAL TO LIBERAL CHURCHMEN.

We can have no sympathy with those who think that by supporting the Liberal party now they may get better terms when the catastrophe occurs further on. There are Liberal Churchmen whose action I confess in this great crisis astounds me. I can understand men who think that the interests of the Church are of an inferior character; who think that the importance of keeping the party together, and supporting the party funds, and getting the party into office, and paying homage to the party leader—that these things are more important than keeping up aright that provision for the teaching of Christianity which has existed for a thousand years. But to those who are of an opposite mind to those Liberal Churchmen, who think that the interests of the Church are the dearest matter upon the whole field of political controversy with which they could have to do—to them I appeal to consider as to the course which they shall pursue now that it is announced in no obscure accents that their leader is prepared to desert them on the first convenient opportunity. They at all events must know the importance of the stake for which the contest is being waged. To judge from the letters I see of a church dignitary in these parts, it is to be presumed that they think that by wearing the uniform of the invader, and by serving in his ranks, and by shouting his watchwords, they will acquire some claim to diminish the force of his onset when it takes place. I should not if I were the invader very much value or praise the support of soldiers of that kind. But at all events they are certainly

betraying the cause which they profess to have at heart. Liberal Churchmen who now support the Liberal party after the declarations that have been made are supporting the machinery which is to destroy that which they hold most dear. They are sharpening the weapons by which the Church is to be struck down; they are furnishing party strength and giving an opportunity of extended organization to those whom they know are the enemies of the institution which of all institutions they in their heart hold dearest. I cannot conceive what the sophistry is that induces them at such a time to join their hands, to join their efforts with those who are ready to undertake the destruction of the mechanism by which Christianity has been upheld in this country.

#### A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH.

At all events we can hold no ambiguous language on this matter. To us it is a matter of life and death. Our party is bound up with the maintenance of the established and endowed churches of this island. We hear many prophecies as to what the result of the impending election is to be, and our adversaries hold sanguine language. Perhaps what has recently taken place in France may teach some of the opportunists of this country the wisdom of modesty in prediction. Be that as it may, we do not look to the result, we look to the principles we uphold, by which we are bound in conscience, by the traditions of our party, and as men of honour to stand or fall. We can admit on these matters no compromise, no hope that we shall support any proposal for the overthrow or for the injury of that which we hold dear, the maintenance of the framework of our Constitution, the upholding of the rights of property, and more than all, the support of the sacred institution, its support by ancient endowments, and by the recognition of the authority of the



State, which now for generation after generation in Scotland and in England has held up the power of truth, and has maintained the truths of Christianity before the world. To that as a party, as honest men, and as Christians, we are irrevocably bound.

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### *DEFENCE OF THE GOVERNMENT.*

(AT BRIGHTON, OCTOBER 15, 1885.)

I thank you most heartily for the kind reception you have given me, and I welcome this large assembly in this hall as a proof that the Conservative cause in Sussex is vigorous and flourishing. Dr. Robertson in his opening address has been kind enough to allude to past history, and to mention that the attainment of an honourable peace was one of the highest distinctions of the Government of which Lord Beaconsfield was the head. I only wish to add to his words that the principles and feelings which animated that Government animate the Government of this day. We are earnestly anxious for an honourable peace, and we believe that as far as we are concerned it is exposed to no danger at all. I have always earnestly pressed upon every Conservative audience what is the essence of our Conservative principles—namely, that we value peace intensely, but that we hold that peace is best to be attained by a steady foresight in policy, by avoiding vacillation or change, by moderation, undoubtedly, but by steadily asserting and maintaining the rights of this country, and carefully keeping clear of every quarrel in which the rights of this country are not concerned. I will not at a moment of foreign policy which is peculiarly anxious, go more into detail, but I only wish in passing to note that our desire of peace will prevent us from



imagining any British interests where they do not exist, but will animate us to be worthy of those who have gone before us, if ever British interests should be threatened.

## NOT TRUE.

I am afraid that one of the consequences of the political campaign that is going forward now is that addresses of the kind I am making to you must assume rather a controversial aspect, and that we must be engaged in pleas and replies and rebutters and surrebutters, meeting the accusations that are made against us, not because we think these accusations are of themselves of much importance, but because, if we pass them by we might be told that we admitted them to be true. It is purely and solely in that spirit that I wish to notice some kind things which Mr. Chamberlain has said of me. Having a difficulty in establishing any substantial ground of objection to the policy of Her Majesty's Government, he is mainly engaged in showing that we are inconsistent. It does not matter very much whether we are or not, but I desire to show you that his charge of inconsistency is as baseless as most of his political assertions. As his charges are somewhat numerous, I will venture to divide them into two heads. The first head comprises those that are not true; the second head, those that are founded on the monstrous assumption that it is our duty to break the promises of our predecessors as soon as we get into office. He mentioned them last night, but he did not do so for the first time; he mentioned them also in a speech he made at Warrington, and perhaps he mentioned them more clearly then. Now the charges that are not true are these. He charges us with having in opposition earnestly pressed the relief of those garrisons which the recklessness of the late Government had exposed to such danger in the south of Egypt.

He states at the moment we came into office that no more was heard of these garrisons which had been abandoned to their fate. Mr. Chamberlain's own words were, "No attempt had been made to relieve the garrisons of Equatorial Africa, which were of such intense interest to the Tories when in opposition." It is not true. We have been intensely interested about these garrisons; we have given our best attention to meet and relieve them, and we have given our influence and our help; and among the officers I would specially mention in connection with this matter is Major Chermside. The Abyssinian army under Ras Alula has relieved Kassala, has scattered the hostile tribes that were attacking it, and has quelled the disturbance. To Mr. Chamberlain's statement, therefore, I reply that we have concerned ourselves about the garrison of Kassala and have relieved them—which the late Government never did—in a most complete and effective manner. In the next place, Mr. Chamberlain says that we have made no attempt to complete the Berber railway. No member of the present Government is insane enough to do that; but if Mr. Chamberlain says we have supported it in opposition that is not true. I myself expressed in the House of Lords my opinion that that railway could not be completed, and we have not attempted to accomplish that which was impossible. Another thing which Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke declare is that we have entirely neglected the interests of this country in Burmah, and that, in spite of all our anxiety for the honour of the country, we have allowed the French to establish influence there. It was a rash accusation to make, because, as it happens, we took an early opportunity of calling the attention of the French Government to the things which were being done in their name, and we gave them an opportunity, of which they availed themselves in the most straightforward and friendly manner, to disavow any complicity or

any share in the efforts which were made in Burmah by certain speculators to withdraw a portion of the Empire from the influence which Great Britain alone should exercise. What may happen in Burmah itself I do not venture to prophesy; that is a matter for the Indian Government; but it is a principle from which we cannot depart that no other influence than our own must prevail in a territory so deeply affecting the interests of our Indian Empire. The fourth statement by Mr. Chamberlain is that the retirement from the Soudan, to which we objected, has been carried on by us now. But when we came into office the whole of the Soudan up to Dongola had been evacuated; the whole of Dongola had been evacuated, and 12,000 of the luckless population, to avoid the vengeance of the Madhi, had fled from their homes and had taken refuge in Upper Egypt. There was left behind one rearguard, at a place called Debbah, with one week's provisions, and that was all that we found when we took office. It is perfectly true that we told that rearguard to go south. It could not have sustained itself with provisions which were exhausted. But the policy of the late Government had decreed that unhealthy and most dangerous evacuation, and we stopped it at the first point at which, on military principles, it was capable of being stopped.

#### THE PLEDGED FAITH OF ENGLAND.

I think I have shown you that with respect to these charges of Mr. Chamberlain, they must be met with a complete and absolute denial. Well, now, he has other charges. He says the financial agreement with Egypt, which we condemned as muddled and inadequate, has been carried out. Well, it was muddled, and it was inadequate. I expressed that opinion in opposition, and all that I have learnt in office has only confirmed me in that view. But, unfortunately, it was an agreement to which England had set her hand, and Mr.

Chamberlain's contention, as I understand it, is that we ought to have torn up the agreement to which England had set her hand, because our adversaries were in office at the time. I do not like to say what name would be applied to such a proceeding in private life. What would you think of a man, who through his agent had come to a certain agreement, and when the agent went away and another agent came, said, "I have changed my agent, and therefore I shall treat the agreement as having never taken place?" There is no term of contempt and opprobrium which you would think too strong for such a man. Yet that is the standard of morality according to which Mr. Chamberlain desires that the affairs of England should be conducted. We do not approve of the principles of the Egyptian loan, but we approve still less of any action that is false to the pledged faith of England; and if Mr. Chamberlain says that at any time in our career in opposition we have maintained the doctrine that you may disregard the pledged faith of England because pledged by your opponents, I must again repeat the words "That is not true." And so in regard to the Afghan boundary. Mr. Chamberlain says that we did not approve of the Afghan boundary when in opposition. No, we did not approve of it then, and were we tied by no engagement we should not approve of it now. But we found certain engagements in existence, and these we loyally carried out. There was this difference in our treatment, both of the Egyptian loan and of the Afghan boundary, from that of our opponents, that whereas they were landed in a hopeless deadlock, we were enabled to come to a satisfactory issue. I see that both Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke talk of Zanzibar. I am tempted to believe that Lord Granville never informed them what was going on in the Foreign Office, because the same state of the case exists absolutely there. While the late Government were in office the Em-

peror of Germany announced to them that he had taken certain territories in Africa under his protection. Lord Granville not only expressed no objection, but said that he was perfectly willing to welcome the German efforts at colonization, and he proposed that a joint commission should be appointed to determine what were the true limits of the Sultan of Zanzibar's dominions. That is precisely what we have carried out, and we have done nothing else. We have carried out the agreement which Lord Granville made during his term of office. In adherence to the principle that the pledges of one Government must be completely and loyally carried out by its successors, we have simply carried out that to which our predecessors pledged the country, and we have done absolutely nothing else. Do not understand me to blame Lord Granville for his action in the case of Zanzibar. I think that on the whole any course which would open these great and vast districts of Central Africa to the commerce of the world must indirectly serve the interests of this country. I therefore think that action in British interests was right. But all I am concerned now to show in answer to Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Chamberlain is that it was the action of their Ministry and not of ours.

#### LIBERAL MEASURES PREPARED IN THE CONSERVATIVE KITCHEN.

We have had attacks of a very different kind from a different quarter. There have been three Whig orators endeavouring to bring to light Whig principles which had been somewhat obliterated in this controversy. They were in considerable difficulty. The union of the Liberal party at this moment especially is not the most conspicuous characteristic that belongs to them. In fact, they express their opinions of each other with a freedom which certainly exalts one's opinion of their mutual



tolerance. Mr. Chamberlain speaks of Lord Hartington as a Rip van Winkle and of Mr. Goschen as a skeleton at a feast. Under these circumstances the position of Whig orators is a little difficult, and you may observe that their speeches are usually framed upon this model. As a kind of homage to etiquette they always begin by advising me, but when they have got over that necessary point, they proceed to devote several columns to demolishing arguments of Mr. Chamberlain, and their difficulty in attacking us is one with which it is impossible not to sympathize. They cannot attack us because, unfortunately, they agree with us. Lord Hartington fully admits that in many of his opinions he is much nearer to us than he is to the extreme members of his own party. Mr. Goschen objects to Liberal measures prepared in a Conservative kitchen. So that they are prepared in a Liberal kitchen they are all right, but he determines his value of the dinner that is set before him, not by the quality of the meats, but by the nature of the kitchen in which these meats were prepared. Controversialists reduced to these straits obviously, if they mean to attack us, must have recourse to something else besides mere arguments, and what they have very wisely taken to is the suggestion of interminable suspicions. They cannot say we have done wrong; they cannot say we do wrong. But they say they are perfectly certain from a knowledge of our innate character that we shall do wrong, and the necessity of producing suspicions of this sort betrays them into indiscretions of a very remarkable kind. Now, I have here a passage, which I confess filled me with astonishment, in which Lord Derby describes what may be reasonably expected from a Tory Government. This was on the 10th of October:—"I think I can guess pretty accurately what are the lines on which they (the Tories) are likely to travel. They require to interest the popular imagination, to distract the public mind from questions of internal policy, and the



shortest way of doing that is to engage in a dashing, adventurous, and costly system of foreign policy, spend freely, swagger a good deal, go as near to quarrelling with a foreign State as you can without actual war, and for the moment all the world will look that way." I think if this passage were to fall into the hands of some future historian he would say it was an accurate description by a Tory orator of the conduct of Mr. Gladstone's Government.

#### THE STORY OF THE SOUDAN.

Lord Derby seems to imagine that he can recall again the accusations of 1880, and can charge upon us the guilt of adventurous and costly warlike policies; but the bloody record of the Egyptian policy stands between him and that attempt. Political memories are short, and Lord Derby seems to imagine that the history of the late Government has been forgotten—in three months. But, as he forgets it, let me remind you for a moment of what the history of the late Government—one of whose principal members denounces swagger, adventure, and cost—was. When we left office Egypt was flourishing, by the admission of our opponents. The people were never so happy. Public wealth was never so great—the taxes never so light. Lord Hartington the other day said—it is a very curious phrase—"The system which we found in Egypt, and which broke to pieces in our hands, was not a system of our own creation." The statement that it broke to pieces in your hands is familiar to many of us in our domestic capacity. Many of you must have had a bit of china of which the housemaid told you in sad and self-defending accents that it came in two in her hands. But an evil and suspicious world has always consented to put the blame rather upon the china. Well, having disposed of the happy state of things which we left

them in this way, what did they do? They allowed an insane expedition to be made into the deserts of the South, which resulted in the destruction of an English commander and a large Egyptian army. Panic-struck by what they had done they forced the Egyptian Government to announce to the world that they would abandon the Soudan. They forgot that there were garrisons in the Soudan which that announcement condemned to death. The result at once appeared. All those garrisons were threatened with the utmost danger. The garrisons upon the Red Sea came first. They waited until those gallant men had passed through the utmost horrors of a blockade and had yielded at last to the terrible death which follows defeat in an Oriental siege; the failure of Tewfik Pacha, unsupported by England, to whom he appealed; the failure of him and his garrison to maintain Sinkat against the overwhelming enemy that came against him, beaten not in battle but by sheer famine, is one of the saddest and most pathetic incidents of this disastrous history. But when it was done our Government sent out a great expedition, which came to the shores of the Red Sea, gallantly slaughtered 6,000 Arabs, and then discovered that it would be better that it should soon return to the place from whence it came. Then there was the difficulty of the other garrisons, and particularly that of the garrison of Khartoum. They sent out on the most insane journey, without help of assistance or promise of aid, one of the most gallant soldiers our century has produced. Cheerfully he devoted himself to the duty and gallantly he threw himself into the dangerous position that had been prepared for him. He received no guarantees, but trusted to the feelings and the honour of Englishmen. When he arrived and when his danger became evident; when we never ceased to point out his position and the danger he was in, we were told that he was not in danger, but was only

hemmed in. They put the subject off over and over again, and owing to their criminal procrastination the expedition was delayed again and again until it started so late that it was, as we have since learnt, impossible, in fact morally impossible, it could succeed. It was animated by all the courage that in their best days has shown itself in British soldiers, but it arrived too late. I do not know if any of you have read the affecting narrative of Major Kitchener, published in some of the papers a short time ago. It shows that Gordon fell by no treachery, that he fell before pure and simple famine, that the relief expedition was delayed so long that the blockade had time to work, that the wretched men who at last were overcome and slaughtered by the Mahdi had been reduced to absolute impotence by the famine which the blockade had caused. When the news came, what did the late Government do? They announced the absolute necessity of an expedition to Khartoum; they sent out large forces, they made great preparations, they arranged for a railway from Suakin to Berber—I think 250 miles—which was to be constructed in three months. They also sent out pipes to supply water as they went on. The expedition went out, the proper number of Arabs was slaughtered, five miles of railway were made, and then the rails and pipes and soldiers were all ignominiously sent home. It is the man who is responsible for this marvellous and phenomenal exhibition of vacillation, ineptitude, and criminal neglect—it is he who dares to say that it is a characteristic of the Tory party to initiate a policy of swagger and adventure and of cost. I should have thought the recollection of the eleven millions vote of credit would have made these words choke in his mouth as he uttered them.

## PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE.

Well, other objections have been made by these Whig orators, not as to what we did say, but as to what we left out. I was very much attacked for not having entered upon the question of procedure of the House of Commons. My impression is that if I had entered upon the question of procedure I should have been equally attacked for having done it. As a peer, I think it is better that the House of Commons should deal with their own procedure. But if in the most general way I should be allowed to express an opinion, I would venture to say that there are dangers on two sides. Undoubtedly it is a very great evil if by any abuse of the procedure the legislative activity of the House of Commons is arrested; but there is a much greater evil, and that is, any infringement of the liberty of debate. I am not surprised that Mr. Chamberlain should insist so much on this matter of Parliamentary procedure. I am not surprised that he should suggest that a Speaker appointed by himself should have dictatorial powers. Considering the nature of the measures he recommends, it would be very satisfactory to him, I make no doubt, so that they might pass with a mere shadow of discussion. But in proportion as you make a body powerful, you must take care that none of its decisions are arrived at without adequate deliberation, and if it is true—as it is true—that the House of Commons is gathering more to itself all the power in the State, all the more jealously should you insist that all the measures it adopts, especially when those measures depart widely from the old traditions of English legislation, should only be adopted after such discussion as may place the nation in full possession of all that may be said on the subject.

## ENTAIL AND SETTLEMENT.

Lord Hartington objected that I had taken no notice of the question of entail and settlement. When I stand on a platform such as this to-night, I am filled with pity for those who have to listen to my remarks, and I endeavour to avoid such technicalities as may unnecessarily aggravate the horrors of their position, and therefore I have kept very clear of entail and settlement. It is a very complicated question, and though no doubt the great lawyers who undertake it understand what they are talking about, I am very certain that nine-tenths of those from whose tongues these words run with glibness have not the faintest notion of what they mean. The truth is that these two words represent very roughly—I do not say that they do technically, but they do very roughly—two totally different ideas. Entail represents roughly the notion which was very prevalent a hundred years ago, and is to some extent prevalent now—the desire of landed proprietors that a particular piece of land, or estate of land, should descend to their children and to their posterity. It was a very natural desire, which is not consistent with the public welfare. I meant this—that if an inability to sell affects a particular bit of land, if anybody owns a particular bit of land and cannot sell or cannot deal with it, all kinds of evil are apt to arise. It cannot be properly cultivated. Sometimes its owner is embarrassed, and it is very desirable he should be able to sell. At other times he cannot properly improve it without breaking the terms of his settlement. Well, entail of the kind which merely ministers to the very natural feeling of men who desire that particular land which they have acquired should go to their descendants I can approve. I quite agree that in a country of this kind it is to be surrounded with all kinds

of precautions, and may be very detrimental to the public weal; but what I maintain is that that has already been done by Lord Cairn's Settled Estates Act, which has entirely disposed of the danger. Altogether, setting aside one or two estates which have Parliamentary titles, I believe there is not an acre in this country which cannot be sold by the will of some person or persons actually living. It was an enormous change. I have always been in favour of it, and years ago I tried to introduce a much smaller instalment of it into the Legislature; but, of course, a great lawyer like Lord Cairns could do what I could not, and all I can claim is that, being his colleague in the Ministry, I earnestly supported the beneficent scheme he had in hand. That has been done, and if you have noticed the meeting of the Incorporated Law Society—people who really know what they are about—you will have seen that the president stated the enormous importance of this Act, and also that people had no notion of the extent to which it worked. But there is a curious thing about English public feeling—that the effect of any great cry against an abuse lasts a long time after the abuse has disappeared. It is like the sea upon your shores here, which beats upon the beach in a heavy ground-swell long after the storm to which the disturbance of the water is due has disappeared. All that has happened in the present case. Years ago the objection to entail had a great deal of meaning in it. Lord Cairns has removed that objection altogether. There may be corrections in detail to be made still, but, speaking roughly, he has removed it altogether. But still the old habit survives, and people drop off their tongue settlement and entail as though they represented all the abuse to which Lord Cairns has put an end for ever. Settlement represents a totally different idea, and my belief is that it represents an idea which will defy the efforts of Parliament to overcome, if Parliament should be so ill-



advised as to attempt it. When a man gives a daughter in marriage, no matter to what class he belongs, if he belongs to any class where there is any fixed property whatever—money or land—he desires that something should be settled on his child, so that she should not be absolutely at the mercy of the character of the husband to whom she is given. That character is undeveloped at the time of the marriage. He may for aught the father can know take to the turf or to unwise proceedings upon the Stock Exchange, or to any course which men take to become rich and become poor. Therefore, it is merely a natural result of paternal instinct that he insists that, so far as possible by marriage settlement, she and her children shall be made secure. Therefore the property, whatever it is—be it land or money, it does not matter—is settled upon her for her life, and more or less upon her children after her. But it is a very natural feeling. If you go against it you will go against one of the most deep-seated feelings of human nature. And what good will you do? What advantage is it that you should favour legislation having for its object the securing of penniless widows and orphans? Surely precaution and thrift are virtues in any community. Surely they ought to be honoured in a commercial community such as this. While I am thoroughly at one with the policy which makes every bit of land saleable, I am not at one with the policy which enables a man to squander the property of his wife and children, and that is the general law of division on which we shall proceed. I do exhort you, if you form an opinion on these things, to look into them for yourselves, and not to accept the language which is flung from every platform. The principal operation of entail at the present day is to prevent mortgages. Everybody who holds an entailed estate can by law sell it as much as he pleases, but what he cannot do is to mortgage it to an unlimited extent. He can only

mortgage it to the extent of his settlement. An unlimited power of mortgaging is not for the benefit of the community. You hear in every country where small estates prevail this one cry proceeding, that the mass of the peasant proprietors have mortgaged their properties and are at the mercy of the money-lenders. It is the great danger that attaches to landed property, and, undoubtedly, if you strike down this system of marriage settlements which now exists you will have to face an enormous increase in the practice of mortgaging, which will make land less disposable and even less capable of improvement than it is now. And there is one other consideration which I wish to commend to your thoughts, but I feel some hesitation in doing so, for I am afraid you will denounce it as a paradox. Use your efforts in cheapening the transfer of land and in removing entail and settlement, if you please to do so; but I hope your efforts in doing it are for the purpose of allowing the land to flow more freely, according to its natural bent, from vendor to purchaser. Now, I observe that on every platform it is assumed that the result of this proceeding will be that the land will be more universally diffused—that is to say, that poor men will buy it instead of rich. I disbelieve that consequence altogether. I say that the consequence of removing restrictions is that the thing from which you remove the restrictions does that which it has a natural tendency to do. If you remove a restriction from a lot of schoolboys they go to the pastrycook. If you take up the balks or sea-walls that confine your beach, your beach flies to the side towards which the prevalent current of the Channel rises. It will be the same with land. Remove every obstacle, destroy every restriction, make land transfer cheap, forbid any deeds that will prevent the free transfer of land—the only result will be that land will flow with greater and greater volume towards that direction to which it naturally tends. What is that direction? Is it

towards small properties? You know from the history of the country that it is not, that small properties tend to disappear, that the people who have them only desire to sell them. In proportion as land becomes more difficult to work and its profit becomes more uncertain, in proportion as you load with disabilities and accumulate disadvantages upon it, in that proportion it becomes a kind of investment in which only the rich man can indulge and from which the poor man must carefully turn, and therefore I say that all this talk about relieving land of restrictions, though I have no objection to a great deal of it, will not answer the objects which its advocates have in view. The results of destroying entail and settlement will be these—the mortgages will multiply where estates do not change hands, and where they do change they will go to richer men and in larger masses than they did before.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN.

Mr. Chamberlain has been very severe upon me for the accusations which I have used with respect to small tenancies that are to be provided by the local authority. The local authority providing small tenancies all over the country is Mr. Chamberlain's idea of a healthy State. He says that I have made a mistake in saying that land only yields 2 per cent. He asks whether land is sold at fifty years' purchase. No, that is perfectly true; it is not sold at fifty years' purchase. When it is sold at all it is sold at twenty or twenty-five years' purchase. Mr. Chamberlain thinks he has found me out in a great mistake, but I venture to say that this discussion on land had better be carried on by persons who know something about it. Mr. Chamberlain is entirely forgetting the outgoings upon the land; and any landed proprietor who happens to be here will know that that is not an unimportant consideration. You

must remember that it is not only the amount of so many years' purchase of the land which is concerned; there is the subject also of the expenditure upon and the reviving of the land, of the building of houses, the provision of wages and legal expenses, and we have also to take into consideration those who do not pay rent when it is due, but find it more expedient to go elsewhere. If I could empanel a jury of landowners I would ask them if, after a close examination of all these questions and all these considerations, 2 per cent. can be generally paid upon the land? Well, then, Mr. Chamberlain is indignant because I say that the local authority, when it borrows, must borrow at 4 per cent. He says they may borrow, as I understand him, on the credit of the State. But that is a very formidable prospect. In another account of his speeches, he says his proceedings are to ensure that the majority of the present agricultural labourers shall be attached to the land, and the English Treasury is to find, by borrowing money to purchase land, sufficient to satisfy the majority of the existing agricultural labourers. Well, he seems to forget that credit depends upon the amount you borrow. Does he imagine that if the English Government went and borrowed *ad infinitum* its rate would always be 3 per cent.? It raises money at 3 per cent. now, because it is prudent in its borrowing, and does not borrow beyond the limits of its credit. But if it borrowed money enough to purchase land for the agricultural labourers of this country—that is, the small tenements of three and four acres apiece—as my impression is, that 4 per cent. would be a very moderate estimate of the extent to which the interest of the Government loans would rise. I cannot help feeling that all these suggestions of his have been made without real knowledge or careful thought on the subject with which they deal, and, more than that, he has not appreciated the fearful evils which such reckless

utterances may cause. I have been taken to task by Lord Hartington, I think, and by Lord Derby, for exaggeration in treating his language as amounting to confiscation. I should like to read to you a few words of his phrases and show you what sort of principles he desires to establish with reference to landed property, and how far the security of the community, as hitherto existing, is compatible with the principles he lays down. After all, what is the great interest to the working man? Wages. Nothing that you can offer him is equal in his mind to wages sufficient in amount and work constantly furnished. But that provision of work and that flow of wages will only exist where confidence exists, when the capitalist is sure of being repaid for his investment. Both Mr. Goschen and Lord Derby have acknowledged that the present condition of things, when the very tenure of all landed property is called in question, is certain to prevent any owner of land from expending money on its improvement. He dare not tie up his money when he knows that some of Mr. Chamberlain's creations may come down and take it from him. He would be insane if he did, and as long as these threats for democratic agitations against landowners go on, so long will there be unwillingness on the part of landowners to spend, and so long the wages and the employment of the agricultural labourer will be scanty and uncertain. Mr. Chamberlain was grieved because he said that large districts in Wiltshire are out of cultivation. But who is so much to blame as himself? In order to bring this land into cultivation money must be invested in the hope that the produce will be reaped. But with the knowledge that, according to Sir Charles Dilke, a vestry is to have liberty when it likes, where it likes, and at what price it likes, to take land for its owner, what chance is there that a man will tie up his money in the improvement of land when he knows not what chance a Parliamentary



manœuvre may bring him to in the future, or when he knows not what danger his investment may be exposed to?

#### DISORGANIZATION OF THE LIBERAL PARTY.

This is one of the most important questions undoubtedly in the present disorganized state of the body which calls itself the Liberal party. They are unable to come to any agreement on the subject of Mr. Chamberlain's land scheme. Most of the moderate Liberals who have spoken have principally devoted their powers to proving that it is impracticable and unwise, and yet they allow him, ostensibly one of the first leaders of the Liberal party, to go on creating the impression throughout the country that these dangerous proposals, fatal to the flow of capital, and therefore fatal to prosperity and industry, are accepted by the Liberal party and would be carried into effect if the Liberal party were in power. This disagreement of the Liberal chiefs is one of the most serious portions of the problem that stands before you, the electors and the people, to deal with. Remember the terrible history of the last five years: remember that was not due to any individual incompetence of men, and most of them clever men. It was due to the fact that you had a Cabinet so profoundly divided that you could at no time prophesy in which direction its decisions would go, first backward, then forward, then to the right and then to the left, according as the accidental majority of the Cabinet might turn or the pressure of outside opinion might impel the policy of the country. The accumulated and sanguinary disasters of the last five years are due more to these divided counsels than to any other single cause that you could name. And yet with the spectacle of counsels still more divided before you you are asked to renew the trust in the men who have so much abused it.



## DISESTABLISHMENT.

But this is not the most important question that is at stake. There is a far larger question which they have brought into issue and concerning which we watch with intense anxiety what their deliverance is to be. What is their opinion with respect to religious education? What is their opinion with respect to the establishment of the Church of England? I put the two together because they aim at the same thing, and because they will be affected by the same contingency. What have you in the nature of a definite utterance? Is the matter to be dealt with in the next Parliament or not? You will study the speeches of the Liberal chiefs in vain to know. Mr. Chamberlain thinks it exceedingly improbable. I beg to differ from him. My own opinion is that it is very likely to be. Lord Derby is of opinion that sooner or later the disestablishment and disendowment must come, and, somewhat characteristically, he is anxious to go beforehand and meet defeat. He says we had better bargain with the enemy while it is time, and he offers units as a sort of payment on account. Lord Hartington prudently does not mention the subject at all. Mr. Gladstone says, "There is a wave of opinion coming over." He does not say what he intends to do when it comes. He thinks that his friends will not find it so bad as they expect; and Mr. Goschen answers the question and settles all difficulties by saying that his opinions are those of Mr. Gladstone. Certainly it is not possible to give a more indefinite profession of belief than that. If that is the case, the question that is before you is, Which of these contending powers of the Liberal party is likely to carry the victory? Have you any doubt? You see Mr. Chamberlain with his decided opinions and his resolute action

on the one side, and you see Rip van Winkle and the skeleton on the other. Do you think that Rip van Winkle and the skeleton are likely to beat Mr. Chamberlain? Nothing can be more ambiguous than the statements of the Liberal leaders upon this point. If they were in earnest they would tell us not merely that this matter is not coming before the next Parliament, but that they will vote against it if it does. But they shrink from any such statement. They shuffle from one leg to another. They say it is impossible. They go through every gradation of the degrees of improbability. But they will not one of them commit themselves to the assertion that they will resist it if it comes. You must treat this promise that it will not come before the next Parliament as absolutely hollow. If it does not come before the next Parliament, it will come before the Parliament after that, and those who support and strengthen the Liberal party in the present Parliament will be strengthening and supporting the party which in the next Parliament will destroy the Church. Those Liberal Churchmen who hold the Church to be a matter of more importance than any political object with which they can deal, if they support the Liberal party to a majority in this Parliament, are giving it that strength which either in this Parliament or the Parliament that is to come after it will be fatal to the institution they revere. They may enable it to extend its borders, to strengthen its organization, and possibly to increase its political hold by manipulating according to their wont, the whole electoral machinery, but at all events in one way or the other by giving it strength in the present Parliament; or even supposing the question should be excluded from the present Parliament, which I doubt, by giving it strength in the present Parliament they are enormously increasing the power of the Radical party to attack the

Church in this Parliament or in that which is to follow it. And, therefore, I earnestly exhort them to cast aside all those petty considerations—infinately petty if we consider what the importance of a Church Establishment is—which are connected with the mere name and external aspect of party examination. What does it matter to a man whether he calls himself a Liberal or a Conservative if the institutions which he most reveres are to be destroyed. No doubt politics to many men are wearisome and petty. The small exchange of personal criminations and recriminations repels many minds. Mr. Chamberlain says there is a tendency in all countries towards the disestablishment of the Church. I know not to what he refers. The only thing that I see is a wave of infidelity which is sweeping over the land. He bows his head complacently to it. I cannot be so submissive. To me it is the great issue of modern civilization, and I do not believe that, if properly appealed to, the people are against us. You see what has happened in a neighbouring country. There the classes which take part in politics, honeycombed with infidelity, have hunted Christianity as an unclean thing from schools, from the tribunals, from the hospitals, and the side of the dying patients. But the democracy have been appealed to, and they have shown that such theories have no hold on them, and have visited the authors of such policy with a terrible rebuke. To us these things may be a great encouragement, but we need no encouragement in supporting that which we deem to be more than any political question and higher than any issue of national destiny. We have in the immediate or approximate future a great struggle before us; do not let it be said that we have abandoned and lost the great privilege we possessed through mere slackness or indifference, or unwillingness to take trouble. Let it, at all events, whatever the issue may be, be said that our efforts have been worthy of the cause in which we are engaged. Let

it be written of us that our efforts were worthy the splendid opportunity which we have inherited from many struggling generations of the past, worthy of the tremendous issues affecting future generations which, in the mysterious dispensation of Providence, are committed now to our care.

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*LORD HARTINGTON AND MR.  
CHAMBERLAIN.*

(AT VICTORIA HALL, NOVEMBER 4, 1885.)

We are meeting at a period singularly critical, and on the decision which the constituencies take now will depend the interest of vast classes of men for many years to come. Our adversaries would persuade you that our case is well-nigh hopeless, and they try to amuse us with all kinds of imaginary figures showing for themselves a comfortable majority when the election is over. I need not warn you not to be deluded by fireworks of that kind. They have no means of knowing what the verdict of these new constituencies will be, and their affected confidence is merely a manoeuvre of electoral war. Some events throw light—it may be a doubtful light—upon the struggle that is to come. We may gather something from the municipal elections which have taken place all through the country, and we may gather something from the School Board elections which have just taken place in this borough. Whatever indications can be drawn from those two events are favourable to the Conservative cause. Do not believe them when they display before you these calculations of a confident majority. They are fond of telling you that they must win, that a strong Government is necessary, and that therefore it is your duty to make them win by a great deal. I entirely agree with them that a strong Government is necessary, but that strong Government is to be obtained by voting for the Conservative candidates.

THE COMMISSION ON TRADE.

And now, gentlemen, amid all this discussion, what are the subjects which deeply interest the vast mass of the people of this country who will have to carry their suffrages to the poll? Many remedies for their sufferings have been discussed; but, after all, what interests the mass of mankind most is that there should be plenty of work for all, and good wages given for the work. And therefore it is your first interest that trade, commerce, and industry should flourish. But they are not flourishing at this moment. I have seen Liberal speakers throwing doubt upon the existence of the depression of trade, but if the information which has reached me is correct, those who best know the state of things that happens every morning on the banks of this great river know how real and how terrible that depression is. Therefore it is of the first necessity that we should, so far as we can, combat this depression, find out the causes from which it arises, so far as a Government can, and that we should apply the powers of Parliament and Government to remedy those evils. That is the deep conviction with which we took office, and one of our first measures was to recommend to the Queen that a Royal Commission should issue to investigate this depression and to find out what legislative modification of it can be discovered. It seemed to us that that was so elementary, that it would so go to the heart of all who could feel for the sufferings of their fellow subjects in this exceptional time, that we should meet neither with opposition nor with criticism, but that all parties and all classes would heartily join in such an undertaking for the good of the whole country. We were bitterly disappointed. We found that our political opponents did their best, did all that was in their power to make that inquiry an impossibility and to prevent us from ascertaining where the causes of this depression lay, or how it could be mitigated. Now that they have to defend themselves before their constituents for this



extraordinary outbreak of party feeling, they tell us that there were many people on the Commission who disagreed with them, and that therefore they would not sit on it. But if you are never to sit on a Commission except every one agrees with you, it is obvious that inquiries in this country will be remarkably one-sided. And I may say, from my own experience, that that unanimity of opinion is not necessary. I was asked two years ago, after I had moved a Royal Commission on the Housing of the Poor—I was asked to sit on it. Well, when I heard who was to belong to it, I saw that the Conservatives would be in a miserable minority—in fact, I think that, besides myself, out of the 15 members there were only two others who were Conservatives. His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, of course, belonged to no party, and I do not quite know what party Cardinal Manning belongs to; but all the rest were Liberals except us three. But it seemed to me that it was better, in spite of this disadvantage, that we should go into the inquiry and do what we could for the good of the community. And, in spite of the overwhelming majority of Radicals by which we were surrounded, we worked on for two years, and although I do not claim any extraordinary results from that Commission, still I believe it has done real good and made recommendations, which we have been able to put partially into an Act of Parliament, which mitigated the terrible evils it was our lot to discover. Now, if this answered for the housing of the poor, why should it not answer for the depression of trade? Why should our opponents have resisted this inquiry? Because there were on it, as they said, many from whom they disagreed. They will tell you that it is an attack upon the holy and sacred principles of free trade. I see that Lord Granville last night advanced very much the same thing, and by implication accused me of various things. Among other things—I do not quite understand his language, but I understand him to say I was coquetting with



the enemies of free trade, and was giving sanction to the imposing taxes upon the people's bread. Now, I have tried very hard by every plan to put a stop to that calumny. Mr. Gladstone said the other day that he was happy to see that the practice of vilifying adversaries was confined to the Conservative party. Well, I wish he would look at home upon this subject, for I have heard from every part of the country that his agents and followers—not those who are reported, but those who are not reported—are telling the agricultural labourers especially in every direction that we are in favour of a dear loaf and reimposing the Corn laws. I need not tell you, to use Lord Iddesleigh's classical language, that it is a downright thumping lie. But I do complain that, in spite of repeated denials, such poisoned weapons should be used in this controversy.

#### THE HOLY DOCTRINE OF FREE TRADE.

I want to say something upon this question of the holy doctrine of free trade. There is no doubt that the people of this country have principally taken interest in the question so far as it concerned the putting a duty upon corn, and to that we have expressed our strong opposition. But I am going further. To free trade, to real free trade, to free trade as it issued from the hands of its original teachers, I am a hearty adherent, and I wish to avoid intimating, by any failure of expression, of which I may be guilty—any coquetting, as Lord Granville says, with the enemies of that wholesome doctrine. But because I cherish the doctrine of free trade, I demur very much to the kind of language that is used concerning it, and still more to the extraordinary additions which are made to the original attacks, and which we are required to believe with equal faith. I saw that Sir C. Dilke—to show you what people will say with respect to free trade—I saw that he said, a few days ago at Kensington, “free trade

which, after our race character, is the base of our power." But did it occur to Sir C. Dilke that free trade began in this country in 1846, and that England was not a wholly despicable nation before that time? I have heard of the power of England previous to that date. I had imagined that during the days of Nelson and Wellington and of Marlborough and Cromwell, not to go further back, England was a country in which there was a remarkable capacity for power which was not based upon the possession of free trade. But that is a kind of fetish worship with which you have to deal. They are not satisfied with a wholesome, honest, plain belief in economical doctrines which can very easily be proved, but they set them up as if they were some sacred religion, and directly anybody says anything which by the most exaggerated sophistry can be tortured into an attack upon so sacred a dogma, they all cry out with one voice, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." Well now, my objection to this state of mind is that it is very favourable to the admission of other doctrines, which are not free trade doctrines, which they require us to believe at the same time with the same violence and under the same sanction. For instance, you know that when a gentleman has anything in his portmanteau which he wishes to land without the attention of the Custom House officers being drawn to it, he is very fond of getting into respectable company and trying to pass off his luggage with the rest. That is what is done with some doctrines current in the present day which we are required to believe in as if they were free trade. One of these is—I will give you an instance—that it is wrong to use your tariff, to arrange your duties for the purpose of inducing other nations to open up to you the markets which they now close to you. You know that free trade is not only young in this country, but it is confined to this country, and that all the great nations of the world besides ourselves are strongly opposed to it, and they make us feel that opposition by erecting a wall

of tariffs between us and the markets in their country which is having a most prejudicial effect upon the industry of our people here. Well, I do not think it quite right of them. It is naturally our wish to use every instrument that we have to induce them to abandon a practice which we as free-traders believe to be not only terribly injurious, but also inconsistent with their own welfare properly understood. But we are told we are committing a mortal sin if we try by raising duties on their produce to bring them to a better state of mind. So that we go into this war unarmed. They strike where they like ; we are forbidden by those principles which have been foisted into the doctrine of free trade from beating them with their own weapons and replying to them by their own strategy. I understand free trade to be the negation of protection—that is to say, abstaining from raising an artificial price by excluding the goods of other nations from the markets here. But that has nothing to do with raising the duties in our own tariff for the purpose of influencing the action and legislation of other countries. Let me give you an example. Now it must be a hypothetical example. I will suppose that Spain is treating our manufactures very badly. You must allow me to call that hypothetical, because if I called it actual I might draw a diplomatic correspondence on my head, and I do not say it is actual because the case is very complicated ; but as a hypothetical illustration it will enable me to show you what I mean. Spain, let us say, treats our manufactures very badly and excludes them, while she admits the manufactures of other countries. If we were able to say to her, “ If you continue in that course we shall be obliged to raise the duty on your wines,” it is very possible that after a little time a new light might break upon her reflections. But we cannot do that. We are forbidden to do it because retaliation is a mortal sin under this doctrine of free trade. I utterly deny that the true doctrine of free trade has anything to do with it. Raising the tariff

upon sherry is not an act of protection, because, except a very limited number of persons, nobody produces sherry in this country, and those who do it had better not. Again, it is not burdening the articles of primary consumption—the food of the people, because we do not as a people drink sherry. (A voice : “The poor man’s beer.”) Quite so ; but the poor man’s sherry I never heard of. It is simply an act of retaliation and an act of fiscal war. No doubt war is a bad thing. We would abolish it if we could, but war is our only way of defending ourselves from wrong. Why is it wrong to make it in dealing with our fiscal duties when it is not wrong in other international relations? Of course it must be done with prudence. Of course it should be only done where there is a probability that the end which you seek will be attained ; but what I desire to press upon you is that, under cover of this kind of fetish worship, of the set of doctrines which are called free trade, you are excluded from legitimate acts of self-defence, and that so long as you are so excluded you may sigh in vain for justice in fiscal matters at the hands of the other nations of the globe.

#### DIFFERENTIAL DUTIES.

There is another similar question—I will not go into it, but I want to touch upon it merely to indicate a similar confusion of matters that have nothing to do with free trade as if they had something to do with free trade—viz., the question of altering our duties in favour of our colonies—that is to say, drawing our colonies nearer to ourselves by abolishing, so far as may be, the custom-houses that separate the two. I do not put it before you as a matter that is free from difficulty. I do not deny that in many points you will find every obstacle hard to overcome. But what I demur to is that you should be forbidden from entertaining the idea of differential duties in favour of the colonies as though it were an economical heresy. Why, to narrow down

the internal custom-houses which separate one province from another has always been looked upon as the first duty and the earliest triumph of free trade. What difference does it make if these custom-houses happen to stand upon the sea shore? It would be a happy thing—I do not say it would be possible, but it would be a happy thing—if we could recognize the united Empire by destroying the separation by custom-houses between its component parts just as it has been destroyed between England and Ireland. I want to point out to you another matter with respect to this question of raising the wages of the labouring man. I want to point out to you what seems to me to be the fundamental difference between Conservative and Radical proposals at the present time. The Conservative desire is so to manage affairs, so to remove all restrictions, so to give the necessary stimulus to industry, that you shall advance forward to conquer new realms of industry yet uninvaded, that you shall obtain an entry to markets which are now closed to you, that, in short, the well-being of the working man shall be obtained by providing him with fresh material for his industry, and giving him an opportunity of finding in the wealth which that industry will create an ample satisfaction of all his wants. The Conservative points the working man forward to obtain wealth which is as yet uncreated. The Radical—at least, the Radical as shown by recent discussions—on the contrary, turns his eyes backwards, does not tell him to create new sources of wealth, but says that the wealth which has already been obtained is badly divided, that some have got something, that others have got nothing at all, and that the real remedy is to turn back and fight among yourselves for the wealth that has been already obtained.

RANSOM AND RESTITUTION.

Now, I am not here speaking for the rich man. He will defend himself, and you will find him to be a very hard nut



to crack. I am not defending him. I am speaking of the benefit of the community, and especially of the provision of work and of wages for the working man. And I say that the fatal defect of this Radical finance, which asks you to think of ransom and of restitution instead of looking forward to reaping new wealth by carrying your industry into new markets and making the community richer as a whole—its fatal defect is that it will prevent that development of industry, and for the sake of the wretched morsel which, by disorder, by departing from all the traditions of good government, by destroying all confidence, you may be able to divide, it makes it an impossibility for him to find work and to obtain wages in the future. There is no work to be done, there is no wealth to be created, unless you have first of all capital to help you; it may not be large capital, it may be little capital; but the man must be fed while he is working, and tools must be found with which he is to work. Unless capital is found your industry must starve, and all your hope of obtaining those comforts to which the working man has a right to look must be permanently frustrated. Now, what is the effect of these doctrines of ransom and restitution? What is the effect of turning you back to divide again the fragments that remain of wealth that has been already earned? Why, the effect is that every capitalist, be he large or small, more or less tends to button up his pocket. Well, his money is still with him. He can do with it what he pleases. He can take it into some foreign land where Mr. Chamberlain's doctrines are still unknown, and Mr. Chamberlain's doctrines, remember—do not groan at them; they are the unique possession of this country, and would not be tolerated by any other country on the surface of the globe. But so long as the capitalist has the money in his own hands he is safe, and he is safe if he takes it abroad. If he invests it this country, no matter how, in manufactures, in railways, in the deepening of a dock, in the improvement of the land, in the build-



ing of houses, from that moment he is exposed to the action of any Legislature that may arise that may be under Mr. Chamberlain's guidance, and he knows the risk that he runs. Of course his impulse is either not to expose it to that risk at all, or only to expose it under such conditions as shall insure him an enormous profit to compensate him for the danger that he undergoes. These doctrines of ransom and restitution are not new. They are no discovery of Mr. Chamberlain. They are the common property of every barbarous and uncivilized Government, but in those countries their inevitable effect is that they drive capital out of the land, that they starve industry, that the population melts away, and the prosperity and glory of those countries depart from them. We are far from that extremity yet, but I think I see in the depression that is around us that some of that poison is working in our veins. Depend upon it the army of industry must look forward. It must go forward with splendid fields before it in which to conquer, with a splendid future in which its combatants may rejoice. Do not let it turn back from that magnificent prospect in order to quarrel for the miserable fragment of the wealth which it has gathered in times gone by.

#### THE CHURCH.

Mr. Boord has mentioned to you a subject which occupies the thoughts of the people at this moment even more acutely than those economical questions to which I have referred—I mean the question of the Church. Why has it come forward? If you are to believe a cloud of witnesses, I am the sinner. If you believe Lord Granville, Lord Hartington, and Lord Spencer, and other gentlemen, the Church question is merely brought forward now because I have had the recklessness to push it forward. As a noble colleague of mine said last night, there never was a more brilliant exemplification of the fable of the

wolf and the lamb. But look at what really happened. Last night Lord Spencer informed us that though Mr. Chamberlain had, indeed, mentioned it, we had his assurance that the question was not one which was likely to be taken up in the next Parliament. That is what Lord Spencer says that Mr. Chamberlain has declared. See how history is written. Here is what Mr. Chamberlain really said:—"I am not sanguine that we shall be able to crown the edifice of religious equality. My hope and belief, however, are that such an expression of opinion will be obtained as will justify the leaders of the Liberal party in giving the question of disestablishment a prominent place in our future programme." That is what Lord Spencer calls Mr. Chamberlain's undertaking that it was not to be taken up. Well, you know what it was that induced us to call the attention of the country to the danger that was before us. Lord Granville says that I have disturbed the sleeping lion. Well, I should not give that name exactly to the wild beast we have disturbed. But, at all events, if he was sleeping, his sleep was of a most extraordinary character. Not only had you this announcement from Mr. Chamberlain, the most active and energetic Liberal leader—not only had you a denunciation of the Church couched in language of the utmost acrimony delivered by him both at Bradford and at Glasgow, but you had this other remarkable phenomenon—that 500 Liberal candidates had already pledged themselves to disestablishment. You call that a sleeping lion, and when the matter was brought before the Liberal party, what notice did they take of it? Lord Derby says it must come, and offers Wales as an instalment. Mr. Goschen absolutely declines to pledge himself to vote either for or against it, but said that he would do precisely what Mr. Gladstone did, and Mr. Gladstone said that he could not "discern the dim and distant courses of futurity," But he did not think it would do so much harm as people thought. Perhaps you think, as Mr. Gladstone thought, that this was

a comforting expression to the Church. I want you to interpret Mr. Gladstone's language as it ought to be interpreted—viz., by Mr. Gladstone's former language. You must not interpret Japanese by Chinese—you must not interpret Mr. Gladstone's sentiments by the language of ordinary Englishmen. Gladstone must be interpreted by Gladstone, and by no other interpretation. Now, I want you, remembering the dim and distant courses of futurity, to call to mind what Mr. Gladstone said about the Irish Church two years and a half before he moved the resolutions which destroyed it. This is what he wrote on June 8, 1865—and remember it was early in 1868 that he moved the resolutions by which the Irish Church was destroyed:—"The question," he said, "is remote, and apparently out of all bearing on the practical politics of the day." Then at the end of the letter he expresses a hope that the gentleman he was writing to would "see and approve my reasons for not wishing to carry my own mind further into a question lying at a distance which I cannot measure." There are the dim and distant courses of futurity. We know exactly what they mean. They mean two years and three-quarters. Now, we might have been misled by that language once before, but surely we shall never be taken in by it again.

AN APOLOGUE.

Lord Hartington tells us very unreasonably that it is nothing but my recklessness, urged by the vilest party motives, that could have induced me to call the attention of the people of England to it. I should like to try an apologue, and to put the matter to Lord Hartington in the way of a parable. Suppose that instead of living in this mild age we were living in those old days when Bills of pains and penalties were often passed into Acts of Parliament involving the decapitation of the gentlemen mentioned in their enactments. It was the ordinary

way of disposing of a political adversary some 300 or 400 years ago. Well, I would ask Lord Hartington, supposing the question was not the Disestablishment of the Church but a Bill for the decapitation of the Marquis of Hartington; supposing he found that 500 Liberal candidates had pledged themselves in favour of such a Bill; supposing he found that the most advanced and active and determined Liberal leader of the day had declared unequivocally in its favour, and had resolved to obtain a declaration in support of it from the next Parliament; supposing Lord Hartington found that of the other Liberal leaders one of them said it was certain to come, and proposed taking off one of his lordship's legs as an instalment, and another said it was still in the dim and distant courses of futurity, and the third said he would not pledge himself either way, but would vote as the others did, would Lord Hartington feel that absolute quietude of mind which he now recommended? Would he abstain entirely from waking the sleeping lion? Would he think it a sign of unexampled recklessness and detestable party spirit if he tried to appeal to the people of England to stop this Bill for his own decapitation? Well, then, I submit to him that if these symptoms of coming tempest are discerned by those to whom the Church is as dear as his own life is to him, he has no right to impute it to the vilest party motives or to unexampled recklessness if they appeal to the only judge who really rules in this country to prevent such a disastrous decree from being promulgated. I quite understand Mr. Gladstone's motives. He is largely supported by the political Dissenters to whom this is the one thing needful. He is also supported by a large number of moderate Liberals to whom this measure is detestable, and therefore he relegates it in an ambiguous paragraph to the dim and distant courses of the future, and composes a set of sentences from which it is absolutely impossible to fix with clearness in what direction his own sympathies are turned. Whether that is a noble or

an honourable position for a man with his history to assume, I will leave to his contemporaries to judge. I will only say that I am quite certain that it is a course which would not have been adopted by the Mr. Gladstone of forty years ago.

“A MINISTRY OF ALL THE IRRESOLUTIONS.”

Lord Hartington, in his speech to which I have referred, evidently shows signs of much perplexity and difficulty of mind. There is something quite pathetic in his appeal to his adversaries to know what he ought to do. He discusses all the possible alternatives that could present themselves to him, and he dismisses them with despair. He begins by saying that he is afraid that he and his friends could not well form a party by themselves. Well, I suppose his friends are Lord Derby and Mr. Goschen. I am sure that that would be one of the most remarkable parties which English history has yet presented. There was at the beginning of this century a Ministry known as “the Ministry of all the talents,” and this would be “a Ministry of all the irresolutions.” Can you fancy their inner councils—the Egyptian skeleton and Rip Van Winkle trying to make up each other’s minds and Lord Derby steadily pouring cold water upon both? He then goes on to say to us, with natural astonishment, “Are you really in earnest in desiring us to come over and help you?” Well, it is a very difficult question to answer without incivility. I will only say that I have been taught not to covet or desire other men’s goods; and, without in the least wishing to rob the Liberal party of the treasures they possess, I only hope that when they have a great decision to take they may be compelled to rely on Lord Derby, and that when they have any unpopular opinion to support by vote as well as speech they may be compelled to rely upon Mr. Goschen. But Lord Hartington goes on to point out that he and his friends have fulfilled a very remarkable function in party history. As I understand, he tells us



that the only result of his leaving the Radical party would not be to diminish their power—that is very modest on his part—but would be to make them more Radical than before; so that I understand the function the Whigs perform in the Liberal camp is to cling about the legs of the Radical combatants and prevent them from advancing to the charge. I should not like myself to have that part in political life assigned to me. But, of course, tastes differ in that matter. But how his Radical friends like being assured that this is the function of himself and his friends I confess it passes my imagination to conceive. But I fear that he deceives himself in thinking that the Whigs are performing any such useful office as that which he claims for them in the present state of politics. No doubt, some time after the Reform Bill, so long as they retained their dominant power, they performed a very useful function in the State. They governed, and they did not allow the extreme men on their own side to usurp the reins of power, but that function has long ago passed away from them. They are reduced to the alternative of proving with the most admirable arguments that they ought not to yield, and then showing by their votes that they see no alternative but yielding. They give to the federated party—I will not call it a united party—a certain air of respectability. They have been compared, not inaptly, to those fine names that you sometimes see upon the prospectus of a doubtful company, which represent not the real working men or governing spirits, but only those who commend it to the ignorant public outside. I am afraid that the predatory Radical, who is the dominant animal in the Liberal menagerie, owes it entirely to the Whigs if he is able to provide some fragments of sheep's clothing to hide the familiar lineaments of his species.

“LET THE CHURCH BE SAVED.”

Lord Granville has bitterly attacked me because my language in defence of the Church has been passionate.



I will not retort the accusation. He was never guilty of passionate language in defence of anything in his life. But if our language in defence of the Church is passionate, it is because we have the misfortune to believe in the cause which we sustain, and to be attached to the convictions which we are proud to uphold, and I confess when I think of the tremendous issues which the present course of politics brings before us I recoil with something like disgust from the petty partisan Parliamentary calculations with which Lord Hartington has approached this subject. It is a matter to us of small importance whether he and his friends sit on this side or on that, or support this Ministry or that. What we wish to know is what part men of political leading are about to take in the great issue of the day, and I am glad to see in this morning's paper that many of the best known names upon the moderate Liberal side have stepped courageously forward and, without renouncing in the least degree their own political opinions, have proclaimed that this matter stands in the front rank, and that they will not sanction by their assistance or support any Parliamentary candidate who will not promise to support the Church, be he Liberal or be he Conservative, and that on this subject is the spirit which I wish to see adopted. If the Church can be saved by moderate Liberal votes which will not support a Conservative Government, let the Church be saved. We are sure that the critical time has come in spite of all the confident assertions that are made. We gather it from the confident and acrimonious language of the most confident of the Radical leaders. We gather it from the pledges secretly obtained from the vast majority of Liberal candidates. We gather it more than anything else from the stammering disclaimers and awkward subterfuges of those who try to persuade us to the contrary, and in the presence of such an issue we cannot think of mere party interests. We are defending a Church that has existed for centuries,

before the supreme duty of adhering to the Liberal party was foisted into a modern decalogue—the Church which we believe will last long after the very names of its present opponents have been forgotten. We will support that cause without stint and without faltering. We will sacrifice to it every other consideration that governs us. The issue is in other hands than ours, but, at all events, this shall be said—that, so far as unsparing action and resolute determination can carry us, so far as the sedulous upholding of our most intimate beliefs can effect our purpose, so far as our mere will and exertions can go, we, at all events, will not prove ourselves faithless to the sacred deposit which the piety and the wisdom of many generations of ancestors have transmitted to our time.

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### *MINISTERIAL ACHIEVEMENTS.*

(AT THE GUILDHALL, NOVEMBER 9, 1885).

I thank you most heartily for my colleagues and myself for the great kindness with which this toast has been proposed and received. The custom—the graceful custom—which the City has pursued for many generations of inviting to this opening feast the representatives of the Executive power in this country is something more than a convivial compliment—is something more than the recognition of the kindly relations which should exist among the servants of the public. It recognises that the Government of this country consists of two essential parts, and this city, the greatest and the most ancient of all local institutions, honours itself and honours the Government in holding out to the Executive of the country the hand of fellowship, in token that the prosperity of the nation depends upon the heartiness with which those two essential elements of government work together, never

tempted to encroach upon each other's powers, ever securing the prosperity of the commonweal by the harmony with which they act together.

AN EARNEST DESIRE FOR PEACE.

My Lord Mayor, when last I had the honour of addressing in a neighbouring hall your distinguished predecessor, it was my happiness to be able to observe that an earnest desire for peace seemed to me to overspread the world. I do not think that the experience which we have had since the month of July has belied that appreciation upon my part. At all events, as far as this Empire is concerned, we have little to disturb that peace to which as a commercial nation we are so deeply attached. We had difficulties on the frontier of Afghanistan, which, without extravagant license of language, I might call the frontier of our Indian Empire. Not but that the Afghan Ameer is an independent prince, but his independence is vital to the existence of our Indian Empire. Those difficulties have passed away, and at the present there is nothing but hearty co-operation between ourselves and the Russian Government in marking out the boundary which is to separate the spheres of the two Powers. No doubt Asia is a country which, politically speaking, is electrically charged, and a thunderstorm may with little notice proceed out of that region, but as far as our knowledge and information go there is nothing to prevent us from heartily reiterating those celebrated words of Lord Beaconsfield that there was room both for Russia and for England. They were words full of promise of future peace if they were accepted in the spirit in which they were spoken, and by all that I am able to see there is nothing to disappoint the sanguine augury which his prescient spirit cast when he uttered them.

## BUT A LITTLE WAR.

On the extreme edge of our Empire there is at the present moment an expedition going forward to reduce a somewhat eccentric potentate within the bounds of reason. I am not sure that it ought not to have been done long ago. There are eccentricities of tyranny which no nation is bound to condone, but our earnest hope is that while the operations in which the Indian Government is engaged may have the effect of smoothing the path of that civilizing commerce which is the great pride of our country we shall make as little alteration as may be consistent with the interests of the population and the demands of our own Empire, and that the result will be a large increase both to the opportunities of commerce and to the happiness of millions of mankind. It is our pleasure to believe that in any operations that we may conduct in those parts we are acting with the most complete recognition of the right of that great Empire (China) whose representative so admirably addressed this great audience a few minutes ago, and that in all we may do we shall carry with us their assent and their friendship, on which we lay so high a store.

## EGYPT.

Early in this year our whole thoughts were thrown on Egypt. I need not turn back that melancholy page. Much was done then which may affect our action now. But at all events we have every hope that by patience and care the wounds of the past will be closed, peace will return, order and security will be re-established, civilization will flourish, and the unbounded resources of that marvellous land will be allowed to contribute to the sum of human happiness. It may be that when it was decided at one time to go forward to Khartoum, and at another to abandon Dongola, we thought that second thoughts were not

best, and that we might wish that last abandonment had not been carried out. But nevertheless there is nothing within our knowledge to augur any disturbance of the peaceful process which has been initiated now, or to forbid us to hope that we shall in a few years restore that splendid country at least to the condition which it occupied five years ago. I cannot pass from the mention of Egypt without referring to the very remarkable ability and skill which have been displayed by our friend Sir Drummond Wolff in negotiating a Convention with the Sultan of Turkey upon the subject of our occupation of that country. The result of that Convention I hope will be to remove those grounds for suspicion and hatred which had been unfortunately raised in the minds of a vast Mohammedan population, and, at all events, to persuade them that in whatever we may undertake for the future we are not animated by any antagonism to the Mussulman people as such, and that our operations are not stimulated by the hateful passions which work a religious war. Such misapprehension may have arisen from the belief they have entertained, and it will be no slight achievement if by the help of the head of the Mussulman body we are able to dissipate such lamentable feelings altogether.

## ROUMELIA.

It is not, however, upon any of these countries that the attention of the world and of Europe is concentrated at this moment. A strange change has taken place in the Balkan peninsula, of which the issue is still uncertain. It does not happily concern us so closely as former movements on the Balkan peninsula may have done, because it differs from all previous disturbances of the kind in that it appears to have issued from the spontaneous action of the population themselves, and to have had no connection whatever with any foreign prompt-

ing. With respect to controversies that may arise between the sovereign and his revolted people, it may be, in our opinion, we may offer our advice. We may indicate the course which we think it most desirable to pursue, but we are not, in the first instance, interested in the issue, and we have no ground for apprehending that we shall ever be called upon for material intervention. The Roumelian insurrection was a spontaneous movement apparently of the people. It was, as is now evident, instigated by no power from without. It was an expression on their part, apparently tolerably unanimous, of the way in which they desire to be governed. I see it said very frequently that our course in this matter is decided beforehand, and that we are bound to maintain the provisions which were devised seven years ago, and that if we don't we shall be guilty of a great inconsistency.

#### PUTTING ASIDE CONSISTENCY.

Now, let me put aside that idea of inconsistency in these matters altogether. After all, we are only performing the duty of doctors of the body politic. I see distinguished members of the medical profession before me, and I would ask whether they would not be very much surprised if they were to prescribe one day for a patient a febrifuge, and going to him three weeks afterwards to prescribe a tonic. Suppose my hypothetical doctor, having prescribed a febrifuge three weeks ago, now came to prescribe a bottle of champagne, would he not be surprised at the patient who should accuse him of inconsistency? We should be very odd doctors of the body politic if we undertook always to prescribe exactly the same medicine at different times without any reference to the condition in which the patients might find themselves. That is precisely the condition with respect to these Bulgarian populations. The Berlin treaty not only has not



failed, but has done its work in a wonderfully short time. The object of the Berlin Treaty was to ensure that the populations who were separated from the immediate government of the Porte should be independent; that they should grow up with a true national life; that they should be able to defend themselves, and that they should prevent any invasion or encroachment either on their own freedom or on the freedom of Turkey that lay behind. They have fulfilled that duty far more rapidly than we could have expected. They have displayed great independence of spirit. Nobody can suspect that any foreign influence is acting upon them, and I entirely deny that even should it be necessary to modify in certain particulars the provisions of the Berlin Treaty you can therefore say that the Berlin Treaty has failed. It would be as foolish as to say that the febrifuge of the doctor has failed because after it had been administered he ordered a bottle of champagne.

#### THE CONFERENCE.

As you, my Lord Mayor, are aware, there is a Conference of Europe to consider this question, and I will not venture to trench upon the province of that august body. I will not even mention any little slips of information with respect to their proceedings which may have accidentally reached me; but there is this difference between the present condition of the Balkan Peninsula and any which preceded it—that the obstacle to the admission of the desires of the population does not arise from any foreign influence. It does not even arise apparently from the action of the Ottoman Government itself. The Sultan might, according to that treaty, if he had pleased, have interfered the very next day after the rising and have put it down. I do not say he would have been wise to do so. But if he had done so nobody could have contested his treaty right to act in that manner. He did not do so, however; and if

there is now any obstacle to allowing those two Bulgarian provinces to be governed in the fashion which they think best, it arises, not apparently so much from the opinion of the Ottoman Porte, or from the opinion of the foreign Powers, as from the position which is taken up and the doctrines which are propounded by the other States on the Bulgarian Peninsula. There are the Servians, and there are the Greeks who are outside the Ottoman Empire, but who appear to have laid down this very remarkable condition of international law, that if the Bulgarians obtain any advantage at the expense of the Turkish Government they have a right to what is called compensation, and compensation consists in getting a slice of the Turkish Empire. It appears that this doctrine means that unless the Bulgarians are remitted to the exact condition in which they stood three months ago, Servia and Greece will insist upon a portion of the Turkish Empire being added to their own border. This doctrine is more likely than any other to stand in the way of the realization of the hopes of the Bulgarians. It is not for me to forecast what the action or what the decision of the Conference may be, but I have a strong opinion that any political structure which is erected in distinct defiance of the population to whom it is to apply is not likely to have any long duration. I have this further opinion that if the particular form of government which the Bulgarians desire is refused to them, because if it is to be given compensation must also be given to the Serbs and to the Greeks, the only result of that determination will be, not that the Bulgarians will for the future abstain from trying to obtain the form of government which they prefer, but that they will recognize that it is necessary to take the Serbs and Greeks into their council. The result will be that any movement upon the Turkish Empire will be a movement of three small Powers instead of a movement of one. It is therefore the hope of her Majesty's Government in the first instance that the strength of the Turkish Empire may be retained

undiminished, because we believe it to be a guarantee of the peace of Europe; and, in the second, that any arrangement in which Europe may agree may be of such a character as to satisfy the populations whom it concerns, and to discourage any future attempts upon the integrity of the Turkish Empire, which we recognize as an essential portion of the European system.

## THE GOVERNMENT OF LONDON.

My Lord Mayor, I have touched on these matters of foreign policy. It was hardly competent for me to avoid them; but they are not matters which occupy chiefly the opinion and feelings of Englishmen at this time. We have—you need only look upon any page of the newspapers to see it—we have plenty of controverted questions which attract voluble orators and move eager audiences. I am rather precluded from going into them by the knowledge that this hall and the hospitality of the Corporation of London is limited to no one party, and that I could not here enter upon questions by which parties are divided. Perhaps there is one subject on which, though it has a touch of party tendency, I may be permitted to observe. Perhaps both Whigs and Tories in this hall will forgive me for hoping that whatever changes may be in store for the future they will not diminish the position, the dignity, and character of the Corporation of the City of London. If I rightly interpret the documents that I have read the City of London does not wish to deny to the other portions of the metropolis those benefits of municipal government which it enjoys in so high a degree; but from its own experience—an experience which is not of yesterday—it pronounces in favour of smaller areas as against large as the foundation of those municipal governments, and it protests against the creation of a municipality which has no example within these kingdoms, and whose size will destroy most of the benefit which municipal government confers. I do not

speak entirely without confirmation from recent experience. We have had a very remarkable conflict in the metropolis within the last ten days. We have had an appeal against the extravagance of a large body elected by the whole metropolis; and by whom was that appeal conducted? By the representatives of the smaller areas, themselves popularly elected, who were enabled to appreciate the dangers in which this huge, unwieldy body was rushing. The experience of the last ten days justifies me in saying that those who look to municipal government for economical and careful administration will be very jealous of any scheme that should so enlarge the area as to diminish the anxiety which each man feels in the success of the organization.

#### BOYCOTTING.

Well, my Lord Mayor, there are other thorny questions. When I had the honour of addressing your predecessor I ventured the opinion with respect to Ireland that my noble friend the Viceroy (the Earl of Carnarvon) would not be found wanting in maintaining the duties of his office, and, above all, in sustaining that firm and equable administration of justice which is the one condition of the existence of a civilized country. I do not think the experience through which we have passed at all falsifies that claim. I believe that, as regards outrage, the experiment of relying upon the ordinary law has been decidedly a success. It has not operated with so much success upon a peculiar species of offence to which a colloquial term is given—the intimidation which is exercised by large bodies of men upon particular traders and individuals. How far it is possible for the law to strike at them at all, how far they derive their peculiar power from the fact that they are a mixture of legal and illegal acts, and that no sharpness which it has yet been possible to give to the instruments of the law has been able to separate the two, I think there is great reason to question. It is one of the

most difficult points of administration in our time, when legal acts with illegal intentions are done, not by isolated individuals, but by large bodies of men. But of this I am quite certain, that such matters must be the subject of the careful investigation of Parliament, and that the first duty which Parliament has to perform is to see that all men can pursue their industry in peace, and that if existing means are not sufficient and existing public opinion is not sufficient to secure that supreme end, then it is the first duty of Parliament to take every precaution to ensure that that essential result shall follow. With respect to larger organic questions, I have nothing to add to what I have said. The traditions of our party are well known. The integrity of the Empire is more precious to us than any other possession. If I may add another consideration, we are bound by motives not only of expediency, not only of legal principle, but by motives of honour, to protect the minority, if such exist, who have fallen into unpopularity and danger because they have maintained as champions or as instruments the policy which England has deliberately elected to pursue. But within these lines—most important lines—the policy which every English Government—and I am sure the present one—would pursue would be to do all that was possible to give prosperity, contentment, and happiness to the Irish people. As to other questions that are in dispute I will not go into them. They are comparatively trivial, many of them, and they raise questions of controversy. I will only add that the tendency in this day is not towards liberty but towards coercion; that each man when he thinks he sees how society ought to go immediately desires to procure an Act of Parliament to force society to follow that course. In any of the reforms which lie before us and which it will be our duty to undertake I earnestly hope that whatever Parliament exists it will remember that freedom does not consist in the despotic government of the minority by a bare



majority. Freedom consists in carrying along with you, while shaping the institutions under which you dwell, the vast mass both of the majority and the minority.

But there are some matters about which, without touching controverted ground, I may call your attention to the deep, the important issues which the next year or two will have to decide. There are matters now before us differing from all former subjects of controversy in that they go deep—if I may use a surgical metaphor—to the bone of the body politic, that they open wounds which will not readily heal, that they excite resentment which generations will not efface. There are one or two dark shadows that throw themselves across the political horizon as we look upon it. We hear something about agrarian laws. Agrarian laws have not got a good reputation in keeping together a community, or in securing the permanence of the institutions by which that community is governed. But there are larger changes still. We hear of proposals to separate those things which have never yet been separated in any Christian land—I say never separated where they existed before—to separate Church and State, who have grown up together from distant times, from times so distant that, like foster brothers, they cannot remember when they were not together. It is proposed to tear them asunder, and men look forward with light hearts to the proposal of an operation for which in modern history no precedent exists. I do not ask you to look at the matter from its religious point of view; I do not ask you to look at the matter from its party point of view; but I ask you to remember this—that compared with other nations of the globe you have a small territory at home; that you have a weak military force; that you have a great empire, with means of sustaining it apparently far inferior to its necessities; that you have around you great nations constantly growing in the vastness of their military forces, in the concentration of the energy with



which all power is placed at the disposal of the central Power, and that you meet these nations by this one talisman—the unity of the people by whom these islands are inhabited. Apart from all the questions, and above all the questions that have separated us into parties and have constituted our party divisions, there has been a deep unity which has overcome and overridden every trial. Are we quite certain that we shall so successfully pass the tremendous ordeal that these questions which I have mentioned will subject you to? I entreat you to remember that there is something besides a polemical, something besides a party meaning in these conflicts; that if they deeply separate the sections and the classes of which your unity consists the power of your Empire will be threatened; that if your divisions shall ever take that malignant form that classes and sections shall hate each other more than they love their common country, then the era of their predominance and power in the world will have passed away, never to return. My Lord Mayor, it is my happy duty to close my observations by proposing to this meeting to drink the health of the magistrate who presides on this occasion, and who will govern the destinies of this city for another year. May I augur of you, as I may rightly do, that you will not fall short of the greatest of your predecessors in the lustre with which you will exercise your high office? May I hope that you will leave it to a long succession of Lord Mayors, who will exercise their high office with undiminished splendour and with unrestricted authority, and who will have the privilege year after year of congratulating the Prime Ministers whom they may meet at this table, that we live in a community who, in spite of all the questions which may divide us, and the party quarrels by which we may seem to be wrenched, yet are deeply and irrevocably united in our love for the nation of whose history we are so proud, and the service of the Queen whom we love so well?

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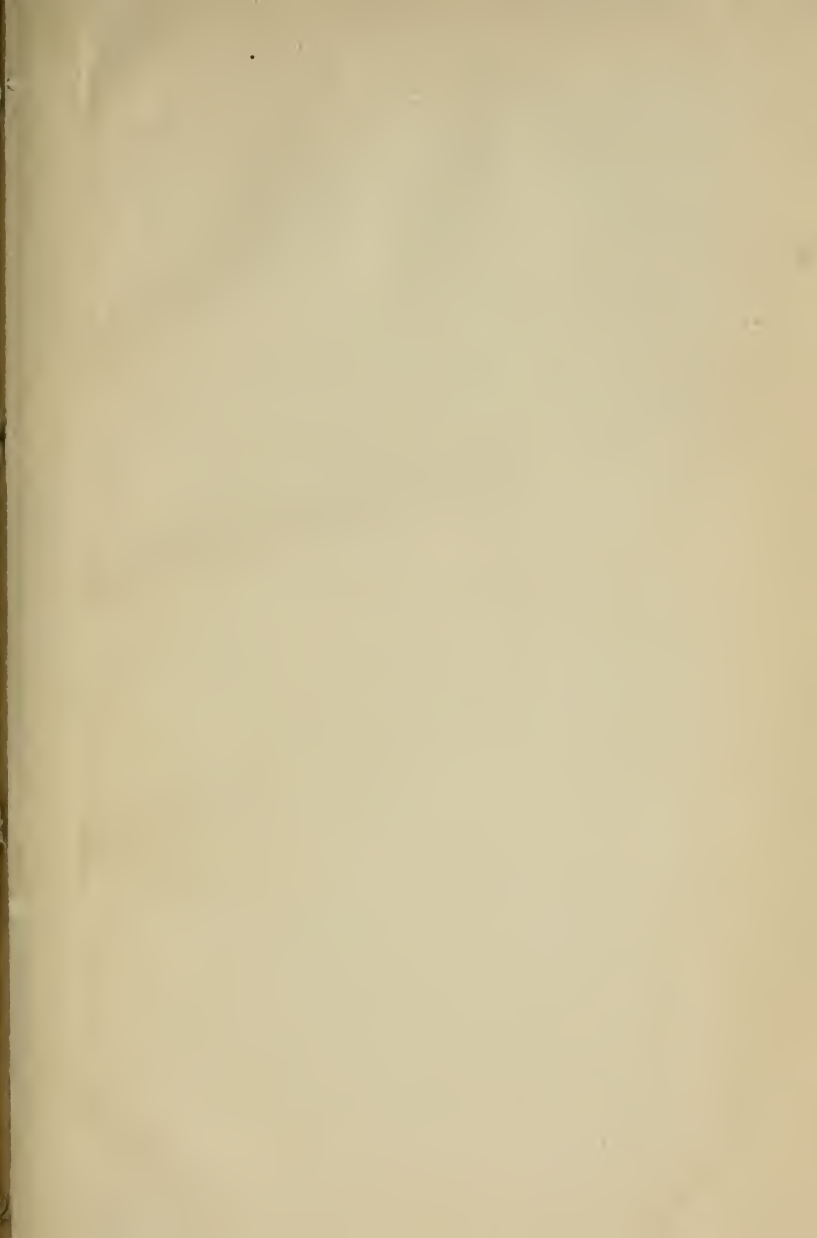
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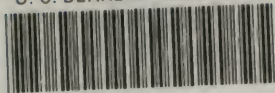
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